

# THE GREAT BOOK-COLLECTORS

CHARLES & MARY ELTON



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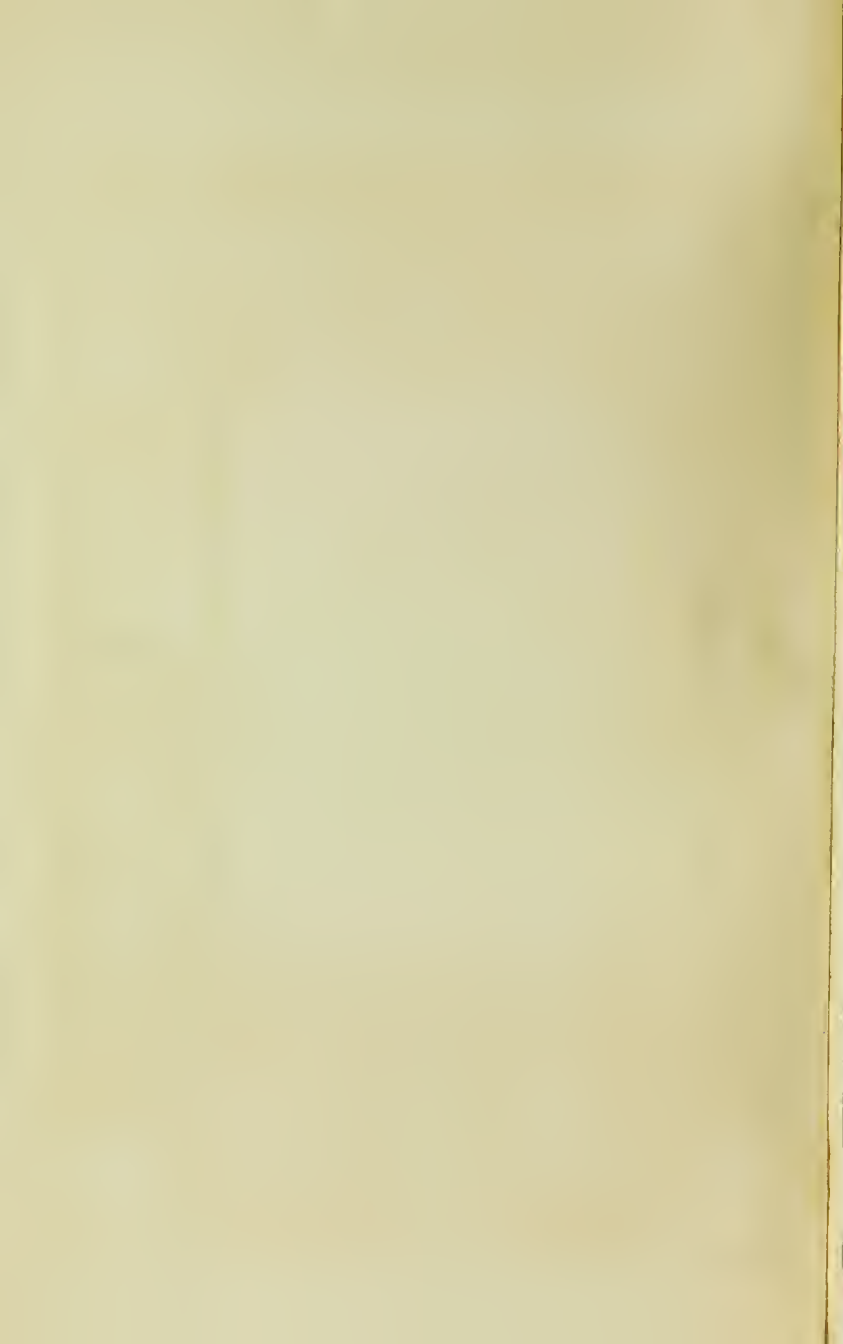


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BOOKS ABOUT BOOKS

ALFRED W. POLLARD

# The Great Book-Collectors

Charles & Mary  
Elton

The Great Book-Collectors  
by Charles & Mary  
Elton

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FABRI DE PEIRESC.



# The Great Book-Collectors

By Charles Isaac Elton ✓

Author of 'Origins of English History'  
'The Career of Columbus,' etc.

& Mary Augusta Elton



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# Contents

	PAGE
CHAPTER I.	
CLASSICAL, . . . . .	I
CHAPTER II.	
IRELAND—NORTHUMBRIA, . . . . .	13
CHAPTER III.	
ENGLAND, . . . . .	27
CHAPTER IV.	
ITALY—THE AGE OF PETRARCH, . . . . .	41
CHAPTER V.	
OXFORD—DUKE HUMPHREY'S BOOKS—THE LIBRARY OF THE VALOIS, . . . . .	53
CHAPTER VI.	
ITALY—THE RENAISSANCE, . . . . .	63
CHAPTER VII.	
ITALIAN CITIES—OLYMPIA MORATA—URBINO—THE BOOKS OF CORVINUS, . . . . .	76
CHAPTER VIII.	
GERMANY—FLANDERS—BURGUNDY—ENGLAND, . . . . .	87

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	PAGE
CHAPTER IX.	
FRANCE: EARLY BOOKMEN—ROYAL COLLECTORS, . . .	99
CHAPTER X.	
THE OLD ROYAL LIBRARY—FAIRFAX—COTTON—HARLEY— THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE, . . .	111
CHAPTER XI.	
BODLEY—DIGBY—LAUD—SELDEN—ASHMOLE, . . .	124
CHAPTER XII.	
GROLIER AND HIS SUCCESSORS, . . .	139
CHAPTER XIII.	
LATER COLLECTORS: FRANCE—ITALY—SPAIN, . . .	158
CHAPTER XIV.	
DE THOU—PINELLI—PEIRESC, . . .	169
CHAPTER XV.	
FRENCH COLLECTORS—NAUDÉ TO RENOUEAU, . . .	183
CHAPTER XVI.	
LATER ENGLISH COLLECTORS, . . .	202
INDEX, . . .	221

# List of Illustrations

PORTRAIT OF PEIRESC, . . . (From an engraving by Claude Mellan.)	<i>Frontispiece</i>
INITIAL LETTER FROM THE 'GOSPELS OF ST. CUTHBERT,' .	PAGE 18
SEAL OF RICHARD DE BURY, .	38
PORTRAIT OF THE DUKE OF BEDFORD PRAYING BEFORE ST. GEORGE, . . . . . (From the Book of Hours commonly known as the 'Bedford Missal.')	59
PORTRAIT OF MAGLIABECCHI, . . . (From an engraving in the British Museum.)	74
BINDING EXECUTED FOR QUEEN ELIZABETH, . (English jeweller's-work on a cover of red velvet. From a copy of 'Meditationum Christianarum Libellus,' Lyons, 1570, in the British Museum.)	112
PORTRAIT OF SIR ROBERT COTTON, . . . . . (From an engraving by R. White after C. Jonson.)	117
PORTRAIT OF SIR THOMAS BODLEY, . . . (From an engraving in the British Museum.)	127
BINDING EXECUTED FOR GROLIER, . . . (From a copy of Silius Italicus, Venice, 1523, in the British Museum.)	141
PORTRAIT OF DE THOU, . . . . . (From an engraving by Morin, after L. Ferdinand.)	168





THE  
GREAT BOOK-COLLECTORS.

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CHAPTER I.

CLASSICAL.

IN undertaking to write these few chapters on the lives of the book-collectors, we feel that we must move between lines that seem somewhat narrow, having regard to the possible range of the subject. We shall therefore avoid as much as possible the description of particular books, and shall endeavour to deal with the book-collector or book-hunter, as distinguished from the owner of good books, from librarians and specialists, from the merchant or broker of books and the book-glutton who wants all that he sees.

Guillaume Postel and his friends found time to discuss the merits of the authors before the Flood. Our own age neglects the libraries of Shem, and casts doubts on the antiquity of the Book of Enoch. But even in writing the briefest account of the great book-collectors, we are compelled to go back to somewhat remote times, and to say at least a few words about the

ancient book-stories from the far East, from Greece and Rome, from Egypt and Pontus and Asia. We have seen the brick-libraries of Nineveh and the copies for the King at Babylon, and we have heard of the rolls of Ecbatana. All the world knows how Nehemiah 'founded a library,' and how the brave Maccabæus gathered again what had been lost by reason of the wars. Every desert in the East seems to have held a library, where the pillars of some temple lie in the sand, and where dead men 'hang their mute thoughts on the mute walls around.' The Egyptian traveller sees the site of the book-room of Rameses that was called the 'Hospital for the Soul.' There was a library at the breast of the Sphinx, and another where Cairo stands, and one at Alexandria that was burned in Julius Cæsar's siege, besides the later assemblage in the House of Serapis which Omar was said to have sacrificed as a tribute of respect for the Koran.

Asia Minor was celebrated for her libraries. There were 'many curious books' in Ephesus, and rich stores of books at Antioch on the Orontes, and where the gray-capped students 'chattered like water-fowl' by the river at Tarsus. In Pergamus they made the fine parchment like ivory, beloved, as an enemy has said, by 'yellow bibliomaniacs whose skins take the colour of their food'; and there the wealthy race of Attalus built up the royal collection which Antony captured in war and sent as a gift to Cleopatra.

It pleased the Greeks to invent traditions about

the books of Polycrates at Samos, or those of Pisistratus that were counted among the spoils of Xerxes : and the Athenians thought that the very same volumes found their way home again after the victories of Alexander the Great. Aristotle owned the first private library of which anything is actually recorded ; and it is still a matter of interest to follow the fortunes of his books. He left them as a legacy to a pupil, who bequeathed them to his librarian Neleus : and his family long preserved the collection in their home near the ruins of Troy. One portion was bought by the Ptolemies for their great Alexandrian library, and these books, we suppose, must have perished in the war with Rome. The rest remained at home till there was some fear of their being confiscated and carried to Pergamus. They were removed in haste and stowed away in a cave, where they nearly perished in the damp. When the parchments were disinterred they became the property of Apellicon, to whom the saying was first applied that he was 'rather a bibliophile than a lover of learning.' While the collection was at Athens he did much damage to the scrolls by his attempt to restore their worm-eaten paragraphs. Sulla took the city soon afterwards, and carried the books to Rome, and here more damage was done by the careless editing of Tyrannion, who made a trade of copying 'Aristotle's books' for the libraries that were rising on all sides at Rome.

The Romans learned to be book-collectors in

gathering the spoils of war. When Carthage fell, the books, as some say, were given to native chieftains, the predecessors of King Jugurtha in culture and of King Juba in natural science : others say that they were awarded as a kind of compensation to the family of the murdered Regulus. Their preservation is attested by the fact that the Carthaginian texts were cited centuries afterwards by the writers who described the most ancient voyages in the Atlantic. When the unhappy Perseus was deprived of the kingdom of Macedonia, the royal library was chosen by Æmilius Paullus as the general's share of the plunder. Asinius Pollio furnished a great reading-room with the literary treasures of Dalmatia. A public library was established by Julius Cæsar on the Aventine, and two were set up by Augustus within the precinct of the palace of the Cæsars ; and Octavia built another near the Tiber in memory of the young Marcellus. The gloomy Domitian restored the library at the Capitol, which had been struck and fired by lightning. Trajan ransacked the wealth of the world for his collection in the 'Ulpiana,' which, in accordance with a later fashion, became one of the principal attractions of the Thermæ of Diocletian.

The splendours of the private library began in the days of Lucullus. Enriched with the treasure of King Mithridates and all the books of Pontus, he housed his collection in such stately galleries, thronged with a multitude of philosophers and poets, that it seemed as if there were a new home for the Muses,

and a fresh sanctuary for Hellas. Seneca, a philosopher and a millionaire himself, inveighed against such useless pomp. He used to rejoice at the blow that fell on the arrogant magnificence of Alexandria. 'Our idle book-hunters,' he said, 'know about nothing but titles and bindings: their chests of cedar and ivory, and the book-cases that fill the bath-room, are nothing but fashionable furniture, and have nothing to do with learning.' Lucian was quite as severe on the book-hunters of the age of the Antonines. The bibliophile goes book in hand, like the statue of Bellerophon with the letter, but he only cares for the choice vellum and bosses of gold. 'I cannot conceive,' said Lucian, 'what you expect to get out of your books; yet you are always poring over them, and binding and tying them, and rubbing them with saffron and oil of cedar, as if they could make you eloquent, when by nature you are as dumb as a fish.' He compares the industrious dunce to an ass at a music-book, or to a monkey that remains a monkey still for all the gold on its jacket. 'If books,' he adds, 'have made you what you are, I am sure that you ought of all things to avoid them.'

After the building of Constantinople a home for literature was found in the eastern cities; and, as the boundaries of the empire were broken down by the Saracen advance, learning gradually retired to the colleges and basilicas of the capital, and to the Greek monasteries of stony Athos, and Patmos, and the 'green Erebinthus.' Among the Romans of the East

we cannot discern many learned men, but we know that there was a multitude ready to assist in the preservation of learning. The figures of three or four true book-lovers stand out amid the crowd of *dilettanti*. St. Pamphilus was a student at the legal University of Beyrout before he was received into the Church : he devoted himself afterwards to the school of sacred learning which he established at Cæsarea in Palestine. Here he gathered together about 30,000 volumes, almost all consisting of the works of the Fathers. His personal labour was given to the works of Origen, in whose mystical doctrine he had become a proficient at Alexandria. The martyrdom of Pamphilus prevented the completion of his own elaborate commentaries. He left the library to the Church of Cæsarea, under the superintendence of his friend Eusebius. St. Jerome paid a visit to the collection while he was still enrolled on the list of bibliophiles. He had bought the best books to be found at Trêves and Aquileia ; he had seen the wealth of Rome, and was on his way to the oriental splendour of Constantinople : it is from him that we first hear of the gold and silver inks and the Tyrian purple of the vellum. He declared that he had never seen anything to compare with the library of Pamphilus ; and when he was given twenty-five volumes of Origen in the martyr's delicate writing, he vowed that he felt richer than if he had found the wealth of Cræsus.

The Emperor Julian was a pupil of Eusebius, and became reader for a time in the Church at Cæsarea.



He was passionately fond of books, and possessed libraries at Antioch and Constantinople, as well as in his beloved 'Lutetia' on the island in the Seine. A sentence from one of his letters was carved over the door of his library at Antioch: 'Some love horses, or hawks and hounds, but I from my boyhood have pined with a desire for books.'

It is said that another of his libraries was burned by his successor Jovian in a parody of Alexander's Feast. It is true, at any rate, that the book-butcher set fire to the books at Antioch as part of his revenge against the Apostate. One is tempted to dwell on the story of these massacres. In many a war, as an ancient bibliophile complained, have books been dispersed abroad, 'dismembered, stabbed, and mutilated': 'they were buried in the earth or drowned in the sea, and slain by all kinds of slaughter.' 'How much of their blood the warlike Scipio shed: how many on the banishment of Boethius were scattered like sheep without a shepherd!' Perhaps the subject should be isolated in a separate volume, where the rude Omar, and Jovian, and the despoilers of the monasteries, might be pilloried. Seneca would be indicted for his insult to Cleopatra's books: Sir Thomas Browne might be in danger for his saying, that 'he could with patience behold the urn and ashes of the Vatican, could he with a few others recover the perished leaves of Solomon.' He might escape by virtue of his saving clause, and some excuse would naturally be found for Seneca; but the

rest might be treated like those Genoese criminals who were commemorated on marble tablets as 'the worst of mankind.'

For several generations after the establishment of the Eastern Empire, Constantinople was the literary capital of the world and the main repository of the arts and sciences. Mr. Middleton has lately shown us in his work upon *Illuminated Manuscripts* that Persia and Egypt, as well as the Western Countries, 'contributed elements both of design and technical skill which combined to create the new school of Byzantine art.' Constantinople, he tells us, became for several centuries the main centre for the production of manuscripts. Outside the domain of art we find little among the Romans of the East that can in any sense be called 'original.' They were excellent at an epitome or a lexicon, and were very successful as librarians. The treasures of antiquity, as Gibbon has said, were imparted in such extracts and abridgments 'as might amuse the curiosity without oppressing the indolence of the public.' The Patriarch Photius stands out as a literary hero among the commentators and critics of the ninth century. That famous book-collector, in analysing the contents of his library for an absent brother, became the preserver of many of the most valuable classics. As Commander of the Guard he led the life of a peaceful student: as Patriarch of Byzantium his turbulence rent the fabric of Christendom, and he was 'alternately excommunicated and absolved by the synods of the East

and West.' We owe the publication of the work called *The Myriad of Books* to the circumstance that he was appointed to an embassy at Bagdad. His brother wrote to remind him of their pleasant evenings in the library when they explored the writings of the ancients and made an analysis of their contents. Photius was about to embark on a dangerous journey, and he was implored to leave a record of what had been done since his brother had last taken part in the readings. The answer of Photius was the book already mentioned: he reviews nearly three hundred volumes of the historians and orators, the philosophers and theologians, the travellers and the writers of romance, and with an even facility 'abridges their narrative or doctrine and appreciates their style and character.'

The great Imperial library which stood by St. Sophia had been destroyed in the reign of Leo the Iconoclast in the preceding age, and in an earlier conflagration more than half a million books are said to have been lost from the basilica. The losses by fire were continual, but were constantly repaired. Leo the Philosopher, who was educated under the care of Photius, and his son and successor Constantine, were renowned as the restorers of learning, and the great writers of antiquity were collected again by their zeal in the square hall near the Public Treasury.

The boundaries of the realm of learning extended far beyond the limits of the Empire, and the Arabian science was equally famous among the Moors of

Spain and in the further parts of Asia. We are told of a doctor refusing the invitation of the Sultan of Bokhara, 'because the carriage of his books would have required four hundred camels.' We know that the Omniad dynasty formed the gigantic library at Cordova, and that there were at least seventy others in the colleges that were scattered through the kingdom of Granada. The prospect was very dark in other parts of Western Europe throughout the whole period of barbarian settlement. We shall not endeavour to trace the slight influences that preserved some knowledge of religious books at the Court of the Merovingian kings, or among the Visigoths and Ostrogoths and Burgundians. We prefer to pause at a moment preceding the final onslaught. The letters of Sidonius afford us a few glimpses of the literary condition of Southern Gaul soon after the invasion of Attila. The Bishop of Clermont gives us a delightful picture of his house: a verandah leads from the *atrium* to the garden by the lake: we pass through a winter-parlour, a morning-room, and a north-parlour protected from the heat. Every detail seems to be complete; and yet we hear nothing of a library. The explanation seems to be that the Bishop was a close imitator of Pliny. The villa in Auvergne is a copy of the winter-refuge at Laurentum, where Pliny only kept 'a few cases contrived in the wall for the books that cannot be read too often.' But when the Bishop writes about his friends' houses we find many allusions to their libraries. Consentius sits in

a large book-room when he is composing his verses or 'culling the flowers of his music.' When he visited the Prefect of Gaul, Sidonius declared that he was whirled along in a stream of delights. There were all kinds of out-door amusements and a library filled with books. 'You would fancy yourself among a Professor's book-cases, or in a book-shop, or amid the benches of a lecture-room.' The Bishop considered that this library of the Villa Prusiana was as good as anything that could be found in Rome or Alexandria. The books were arranged according to subjects. The room had a 'ladies' side'; and here were arranged the devotional works. The illuminated volumes, as far as can now be judged, were rather gaudy than brilliant, as was natural in an age of decadence; but St. Germanus was a friend of the Bishop, and as we suppose of the Prefect, and his copy of the Gospels was in gold and silver letters on purple vellum, as may still be seen. By the gentlemen's seats were ranged the usual classical volumes, all the works of Varro, which now exist only in fragments, and the poets sacred and profane; behind certain cross-benches was the literary food of a lighter kind, more suited to the weaker vessels without regard to sex. Here every one found what would suit his own liking and capacity, and here on the day after their arrival the company worked hard after breakfast 'for four hours by the water clock.' Suddenly the door was thrown open, and in his uniform the head cook appeared and solemnly warned them all that their meal was served,

and that it was as necessary to nourish the body as to stuff the mind with learning.

When the barbarians were established through Gaul and Italy the libraries in the old country-houses must have been completely destroyed. Some faint light of learning remained while Boethius 'trimmed the lamp with his skilful hand'; some knowledge of the classics survived during the lives of Cassiodorus and Isidore of Seville. Some of the original splendour may have lingered at Rome, and perhaps in Ravenna. When Boethius was awaiting his doom in the tower at Pavia, his mind reverted to the lettered ease of his life before he had offended the fierce Theodoric. His philosophy found comfort in thinking that all the valuable part of his books was firmly imprinted on his soul; but he never ceased regretting the walls inlaid with ivory and the shining painted windows in his old library at Rome.



## CHAPTER II.

### IRELAND—NORTHUMBRIA.

THE knowledge of books might almost have disappeared in the seventh century, when the cloud of ignorance was darkest, but for a new and remarkable development of learning in the Irish monasteries.

This development is of special interest to ourselves from the fact that the church of Northumbria was long dependent on the Irish settlement at Iona. The Anglians taught by Paulinus very soon relapsed into paganism, and the second conversion of the North was due to the missionaries of the school of St. Columba. The power of Rome was established at the Council of Whitby ; but in the days when Aidan preached at Lindisfarne the Northumbrians were still in obedience to an Irish rule, and were instructed and edified by the acts and lives of St. Patrick, of St. Brigit, and the mighty Columba.

We shall quote some of the incidents recorded about the Irish books, a few legends of Patrick and dim traditions from the days of Columba, before noticing the rise of the English school.

The first mention of the Irish books seems to be contained in a passage of Æthicus. The cosmography ascribed to that name has been traced to very

early times. It was long believed to have been written by St. Jerome ; but in its present form, at least, the work contains entries of a much later date. The passage in which Ireland is mentioned may be even as late as the age of Columbanus, when Irish monks set up their churches at Würzburg and on the shores of the Lake of Constance, or illuminated their manuscripts at Bobbio under the protection of Theodolind and her successors in Lombardy. A wandering philosopher is represented as visiting the northern regions : he remained for a while in the Isle of Saints and turned over the painted volumes ; but he despised the native churchmen and called them ‘Doctors of Ignorance.’ ‘Here am I in Ireland, at the world’s end, with much toil and little ease ; with such unskilled labourers in the field the place is too doleful, and is absolutely of no good to me.’

Palladius came with twelve men to preach to the Gael, and we are told that he ‘left his books’ at Cell-fine. The legendary St. Patrick is made to pass into Ulster, and he finds a King who burns himself and his home ‘that he may not believe in Patrick.’ The Saint proceeds to Tara with eight men and a little page carrying the book-wallet ; ‘it was like eight deer with one fawn following, and a white bird on its shoulder.’

The King and his chief Druid proposed a trial by ordeal. The King said, ‘Put your books into the water.’ ‘I am ready for that,’ said Patrick. But the Druid said, ‘A god of water this man adores, and I will not

take part in the ordeal.' The King said, 'Put your books into the fire.' 'I am ready for that,' said Patrick. 'A god of fire once in two years this man adores, and I will not do that,' said the Druid.

In the church by the oak-tree at Kildare St. Brigit had a marvellous book, or so her nuns supposed. The Kildare Gospels may have been illuminated as early as Columba's time. Gerard de Barri saw the book in the year 1185, and said that it was so brilliant in colouring, so delicate and finely drawn, and with such enlacements of intertwining lines that it seemed to be a work beyond the powers of mortal man, and to be worthy of an angel's skill; and, indeed, there was a strong belief that miraculous help had been given to the artist in his dreams.

The 'Book of Durrow' called *The Gospels of St. Columba*, almost rivals the famous 'Book of Kells' with which Mr. Madan will doubtless deal in his forthcoming volume on Manuscripts. A native poet declared that when the Saint died in 597 he had illuminated 'three hundred bright noble books'; and he added that 'however long under water any book of the Saint's writing should be, not one single letter would be drowned.' Our authorities tell us that the Book of Durrow might possibly be one of the three hundred, 'as it bears some signs of being earlier in date than the Book of Kells.'

St. Columba, men said, was passionately devoted to books. Yet he gave his Gospels to the Church at Swords, and presented the congregation at Derry

with the volume that he had fetched from Tours, 'where it had lain on St. Martin's breast a hundred years in the ground.' In one of the biographies there is a story about 'Langarad of the White Legs,' who dwelt in the region of Ossory. To him Columba came as a guest, and found that the sage was hiding all his books away. Then Columba left his curse upon them; 'May that,' quoth he, 'about which thou art so niggardly be never of any profit after thee'; and this was fulfilled, 'for the books remain to this day, and no man reads them.' When Langarad died 'all the book-satchels in Ireland that night fell down'; some say, 'all the satchels and wallets in the saint's house fell then: and Columba and all who were in his house marvelled at the noisy shaking of the books.' So then speaks Columba: 'Langarad in Ossory,' quoth he, 'is just now dead.' 'Long may it be ere that happens,' said Baithen. 'May the burden of that disbelief fall on him and not on thee,' said Columba.

Another tradition relates to St. Finnen's book that caused a famous battle; and that was because of a false judgment which King Diarmid gave against Columba, when he copied St. Finnen's Psalter without leave. St. Finnen claimed the copy as being the produce of his original, and on the appeal to the court at Tara his claim was confirmed. King Diarmid decided that to every mother-book belongs the child-book, as to the cow belongs her calf; 'and so,' said the King, 'the book that you wrote, Columba, belongs to Finnen by right.' 'That is an unjust

judgment,' said Columba, 'and I will avenge it upon you.'

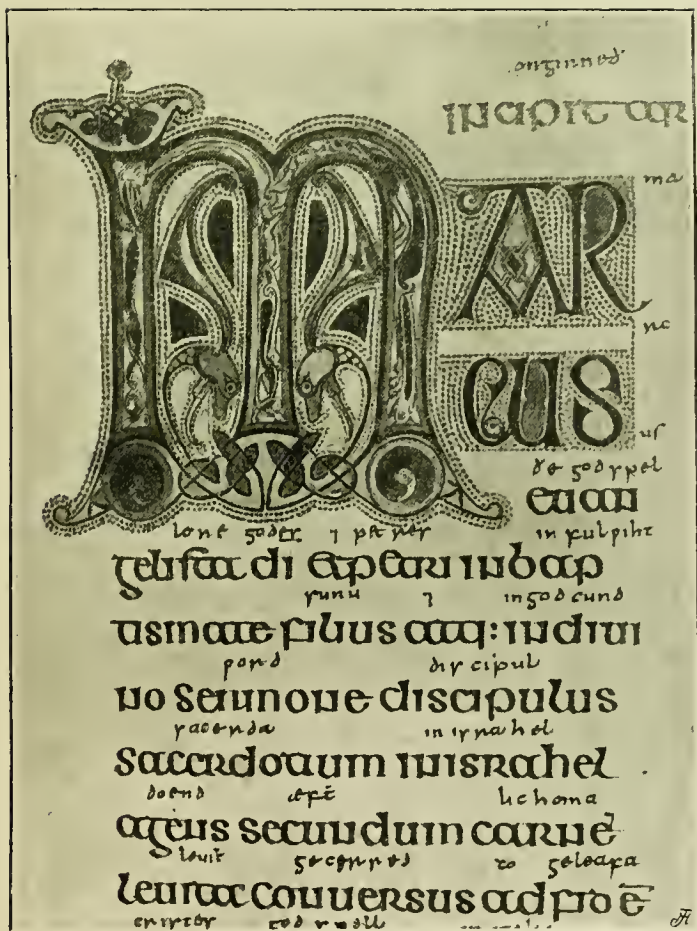
Not long afterwards the Saint was insulted by the seizure and execution of an offender who had taken sanctuary and was clasped in his arms. Columba went over the wild mountains and raised the tribes of Tyrconnell and Tyrone, and defeated King Diarmid in battle. When the Saint went to Iona he left the copy of Finnen's Psalter to the head of the chief tribe in Tyrconnell. It was called the *Book of the Battle*, and if they carried it three times round the enemy, in the sun's course, they were sure to return victorious. The book was the property of the O'Donnells till the dispersion of their clan. The gilt and jewelled case in which it rests was made in the eleventh century: a frame round the inner shrine was added by Daniel O'Donnell, who fought in the Battle of the Boyne. A large fragment of the book remained in a Belgian monastery in trust for the true representative of the clan; and soon after Waterloo it was given up to Sir Neal O'Donnell, to whose family it still belongs. It is now shown at the Museum of the Royal Irish Academy. 'The fragment of the original *Book of the Battle*,' says O'Curry, 'is of small quarto form, consisting of fifty-eight leaves of fine vellum, written in a small, uniform, but rather hurried hand, with some slight attempts at illumination.'

We have now to describe the great increase of books in Northumbria. In the year 635 Aidan set

up his quarters with a few Irish monks on the Isle of Lindisfarne, and his Abbey soon became one of the main repositories of learning.

The book called *The Gospels of St. Cuthbert* was written in 688, and was regarded for nearly two centuries as the chief ornament of Lindisfarne. The monastery was burned by the Danes, and the servants of St. Cuthbert, who had concealed the 'Gospels' in his grave, wandered forth, with the Saint's body in an ark and the book in its chest, in search of a new place of refuge. They attempted a voyage to Ireland, but their ship was driven back by a storm. The book-chest had been washed overboard, but in passing up the Solway Firth they saw the book shining in its golden cover upon the sand. For more than a century afterwards the book shared the fortunes of a wandering company of monks: in the year 995 it was laid on St. Cuthbert's coffin in the new church at Durham; early in the twelfth century it returned to Lindisfarne. Here it remained until the dissolution of the monasteries, when its golden covers were torn off, and the book came bare and unadorned into the hands of Sir Robert Cotton, and passed with the rest of his treasures into the library of the British Museum.

Theodore of Tarsus had been consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury in the year 669. He brought with him a large quantity of books for use in his new Greek school. These books were left by his will to the cathedral library, where they remained for ages



INITIAL LETTER FROM THE GOSPELS OF ST. CUTHBERT.





without disturbance. William Lambarde, the Kentish antiquary, has left an account of their appearance. He was speaking of Archbishop Parker, 'whose care for the conservation of ancient monuments can never be sufficiently commended.' 'The reverend Father,' he added, 'showed me the *Psalter of David*, and sundry homilies in Greek, and Hebrew also, and some other Greek authors, beautifully written on thick paper with the name of this Theodore prefixed,' to whose library the Archbishop thought that they had belonged, 'being thereto led by a show of great antiquity.'

The monks of Canterbury claimed to possess the books on pink vellum, with rubricated capitals, which Pope Gregory had sent to Augustine. One of these afterwards belonged to Parker, who gave it to Corpus Christi at Cambridge: the experts now believe that it was written in the eighth century 'in spite of the ancient appearance of the figure-painting.' Another is the *Psalter of St. Augustine*, now preserved among the Cottonian MSS. This is also considered to be a writing of the eighth century.

In the Bodleian library there is a third example, written in quarto with large uncial letters in double columns, in much the same style as the book given by Parker to Corpus Christi. The Bodleian specimen is especially interesting as containing on the fly-leaf a list in Anglo-Saxon of the contents of the library of Solomon the Priest, with notes as to other small collections.

We have reached the period in which Northumbria became for a time the centre of Western culture. The supremacy of Rome, set up at the Council of Whitby, was fostered and sustained by the introduction of the Italian arts. Vast quantities of books were imported. Stately Abbeys were rising along the coast, and students were flocking to seek the fruits of the new learning in well-filled libraries and bustling schools. We may judge how bright the prospect seemed by the tone of Alcuin's letters to Charles the Great. He tells the Emperor of certain 'exquisite books' which he had studied under Egbert at York. The schools of the North are compared to 'a garden enclosed' and to the beds of spices: he asks that some of the young men may be sent over to procure books, so that in Tours as well as at York they may gather the flowers of the garden and share in the 'outgoings of Paradise.' A few years afterwards came the news of the harrying of Northumbria by the Vikings. The libraries were burned, and Northumbria was overwhelmed in darkness and slavery; and Alcuin wrote again, 'He who can hear of this calamity and not cry to God on behalf of his country, must have a heart not of flesh but of stone.'

Benedict Biscop was our first English book-collector. The son of a rich Thane might have looked to a political career; he preferred to devote himself to learning, and would have spent his life in a Roman monastery if the Pope had not ordered him to return

to England in company with Theodore of Tarsus. His first expedition was made with his friend St. Wilfrid. They crossed in a ship provided by the King of Kent. Travelling together as far as Lyons, Wilfrid remained there for a time, and Benedict pushed on to Mont Cenis, and so to Rome, after a long and perilous journey. On a second visit he received the tonsure, and went back to work at Lindisfarne; but about two years afterwards he obtained a passage to Italy in a trading-vessel, and it was on this occasion that he received the Pope's commands. Four years elapsed before he was in Rome again: throughout the year 671 he was amassing books by purchase and by the gifts of his friends; and returning by Vienne he found another large store awaiting him which he had ordered on his outward journey. Benedict was able to set up a good library in his new Abbey at Wearmouth; but his zeal appears to have been insatiable. We find him for the fifth time at the mart of learning, and bringing home, as Bede has told us, 'a multitude of books of all kinds.' He divided his new wealth between the Church at Wearmouth and the Abbey at Jarrow, across the river. Ceolfrid of Jarrow himself made a journey to Rome with the object of augmenting Benedict's 'most noble and copious store'; but he gave to the King of Northumbria, in exchange for a large landed estate, the magnificent 'Cosmography' which his predecessor had brought to Wearmouth.

St. Wilfrid presented to his church at Ripon a

*Book of the Gospels* on purple vellum, and a Bible with covers of pure gold inlaid with precious stones. John the Precentor, who introduced the Roman liturgy into this country, bequeathed a number of valuable books to Wearmouth. Bede had no great library of his own; it was his task 'to disseminate the treasures of Benedict.' But he must have possessed a large number of manuscripts while he was writing the Ecclesiastical History, since he has informed us that Bishop Daniel of Winchester and other learned churchmen in the South were accustomed to supply him constantly with records and chronicles.

St. Boniface may be counted among the collectors, though he could carry but a modest supply of books through the German forests and the marshes of Friesland. As a missionary he found it useful to display a finely-painted volume. Writing to the Abbess Eadburga for a Missal, he asked that the parchment might be gay with colours,—'even as a glittering lamp and an illumination for the hearts of the Gentiles.' 'I entreat you,' he writes again, 'to send me *St. Peter's Epistle* in letters of gold.' He begged all his friends to send him books as a refreshment in the wilderness. Bishop Daniel is asked for the *Prophecies* 'written very large.' Bishop Lulla is to send a cosmography and a volume of poems. He applies to one Archbishop for the works of Bede, 'who is the lamp of the Church,' and to the other for the Pope's *Answers to Augustine*, which cannot be found in the

Roman bookshops. Boniface was Primate of Germany ; but he resigned his high office to work among the rude tribes of Friesland. We learn that he carried some of his choicest books with him on his last ill-fated expedition, when the meadow and the riverbanks were strewn with the glittering service-books after the murder of the Saint and his companions.

Egbert of York set up a large library in the Minster. Alcuin took charge of it after his friend's death, and composed a versified catalogue, of such merit as the nature of the task allowed. 'Here you may trace the footsteps of the Fathers ; here you meet the clear-souled Aristotle and Tully of the mighty tongue ; herè Basil and Fulgentius shine, and Cassiodorus and John of the Golden Mouth.' As Alcuin was returning from book-buying at Rome he met Charles the Great at Parma. The Emperor persuaded the traveller to enter his service, and they succeeded by their joint efforts in producing a wonderful revival of literature. The Emperor had a fine private collection of MSS. adorned in the Anglo-Frankish style ; and he established a public library, containing the works of the Fathers, 'so that the poorest student might find a place at the banquet of learning.' Alcuin presented to the Emperor's own collection a revised copy of the Vulgate illuminated under his personal supervision.

Towards the end of Alcuin's career he retired to the Abbey of St. Martin at Tours, and there founded his 'Museum,' which was in fact a large establishment

for the editing and transcription of books. Here he wrote those delightful letters from which we have already made an extract. To his friend Arno at Salzburg he writes about a little treatise on orthography, which he would have liked to have recited in person. 'Oh that I could turn the sentences into speech, and embrace my brother with a warmth that cannot be sent in a book ; but since I cannot come myself I send my rough letters, that they may speak for me instead of the words of my mouth.' To the Emperor he sent a description of his life at Tours: 'In the house of St. Martin I deal out the honey of the Scriptures, and some I excite with the ancient wine of wisdom, and others I fill full with the fruits of grammatical learning.'

Very few book-lovers could be found in England while the country was being ravaged by the Danes. The Northern Abbeys were burned, and their libraries destroyed. The books at York perished, though the Minster was saved ; the same fate befell the valuable collections at Croyland and Peterborough. The royal library at Stockholm contains the interesting 'Golden Gospels,' decorated in the same style as the *Book of Lindisfarne*, and perhaps written at the same place. An inscription of the ninth century shows that it was bought from a crew of pirates by Duke Alfred, a nobleman of Wessex, and was presented by him and his wife Werburga to the Church at Canterbury.

It seems possible that literature was kept alive in

our country by King Alfred's affection for the old English songs. We know that he used to recite them himself and would make his children get them by heart. He was not much of a scholar himself, but he had all the learning of Mercia to help him. Archbishop Plegmund and his chaplains were the King's secretaries, 'and night and day, whenever he had time, he commanded these men to read to him.' From France came Provost Grimbald, a scholar and a sweet singer, and Brother John of Corbei, a paragon in all kinds of science. Asser came to the Court from his home in Wales: 'I remained there,' he says, 'for about eight months, and all that time I used to read to him whatever books were at hand; for it was his regular habit by day and night, amidst all his other occupations, either to read to himself or to listen while others read to him.' St. Dunstan was an ardent admirer of the old battle-chaunts and funeral-lays. He was, it need hardly be said, the friend of all kinds of learning. The Saint was an expert scribe and a painter of miniatures; and specimens of his exquisite handiwork may still be seen at Canterbury and in the Bodleian at Oxford. He was the real founder of the Glastonbury library, where before his time only a few books had been presented by missionaries from Ireland. His great work was the establishment of the Benedictines in the place of the regular clergy: and the reform at any rate insured the rise of a number of new monasteries, each with its busy 'scriptorium,' out of which the library would grow. We must say



a word in remembrance of Archbishop Ælfric, the author of a great part of our English Chronicle. He was trained at Winchester, where the illuminators, it is said, were 'for a while the foremost in the world.' He enacted that every priest should have at least a psalter and hymn-book and half a dozen of the most important service-books, before he could hope for ordination. His own library, containing many works of great value, was bequeathed to the Abbey of St. Alban's. We end the story of the Anglo-Saxon books with a mention of Leofric, the first Bishop of Exeter, who gave a magnificent donation out of his own library to the Cathedral Church. The catalogue is still extant, and some of the volumes are preserved at Oxford. There were many devotional works of the ordinary kind; there were 'reading-books for winter and summer,' and song-books, and especially 'night-songs'; but the greatest treasure of all was the 'great book of English poetry,' known as the Exeter Book, in which Cynewulf sang of the ruin of the 'purple arch,' and set forth the Exile's Lament and the Traveller's Song.



## CHAPTER III.

### ENGLAND.

A MORE austere kind of learning came in with the Norman Conquest. Lanfranc and Anselm introduced at Canterbury a devotion to science, to the doctrines of theology and jurisprudence, and to the new discoveries which Norman travellers were bringing back from the schools at Salerno. Lanfranc imported a large quantity of books from the Continent. He would labour day and night at correcting the work of his scribes ; and Anselm, when he succeeded to the See, used often to deprive himself of rest to finish the transcription of a manuscript. Lanfranc, we are told, was especially generous in lending his books : among a set which he sent to St. Alban's we find the names of twenty-eight famous treatises, besides a large number of missals and other service-books, and two ' Books of the Gospels,' bound in silver and gold, and ornamented with valuable jewels.

A historian of our own time has said that England in the twelfth century was the paradise of scholars. Dr. Stubbs imagined a foreign student making a tour through the country and endeavouring to ascertain its proper place in the literary world. He would have seen a huge multitude of books, and ' such a supply

of readers and writers' as could not have been found elsewhere, except perhaps in the University of Paris. Canterbury was a great literary centre. At Winchester there was a whole school of historians; at Lincoln he might listen to Walter Map or learn at the feet of St. Hugh. 'Nothing is more curious than the literary activity going on in the monasteries; manuscripts are copied; luxurious editions are re-copied and illuminated; there is no lack of generosity in lending or of boldness in borrowing; there is brisk competition and open rivalry.'

The Benedictines were ever the pioneers of learning: the regular clergy were still the friends of their books, and 'delighted in their communion with them,' as the Philobiblon phrased it. We gather from the same source the lamentation of the books in the evil times that followed. The books complain that they are cast from their shelves into dark corners, ragged and shivering, and bereft of the cushions which propped up their sides. 'Our vesture is torn off by violent hands, so that our souls cleave to the ground, and our glory is laid in the dust.' The old-fashioned clergy had been accustomed to treat religious books with reverence, and would copy them out most carefully in the intervals of the canonical hours. The monks used to give even their time of rest to the decoration of the volumes which added a splendour to their monasteries. But now, it is complained, the Regulars even reject their own rule that books are to be asked for every day. They carry bows and arrows, or sword

and buckler, and play at dice and draughts, and give no alms except to their dogs. 'Our places are taken by hawks and hounds, or by that strange creature, woman, from whom we taught our pupils to flee as from an asp or basilisk. This creature, ever jealous and implacable, spies us out in a corner hiding behind some ancient cabinet, and she wrinkles her forehead and laughs us to scorn, and points to us as the only rubbish in the house ; and she complains that we are totally useless, and recommends our being bartered away at once for fine caps and cambrics or silks, for double-dyed purple stuffs, for woollen and linen and fur.' 'Nay,' they add, 'we are sold like slaves or left as unredeemed pledges in taverns : we are given to cruel butchers to be slaughtered like sheep or cattle. Every tailor, or base mechanic may keep us shut up in his prison.' Worst of all was the abominable ingratitude that sold the illuminated vellums to ignorant painters, or to goldsmiths who only wanted these 'sacred vessels' as receptacles for their sheets of gold-leaf. 'Flocks and fleeces, crops and herds, gardens and orchards, the wine and the wine-cup, are the only books and studies of the monks.' They are reprehended for their banquets and fine clothes and monasteries towering on high like a castle in its bulwarks : 'For such things as these,' the supplication continues, 'we, their books, are cast out of their hearts and regarded as useless lumber, except some few worthless tracts, from which they still pick out a mixture of rant and nonsense, more to tickle the ears

of their audience than to assuage any hunger of the soul.'

A great religious revival began with the coming of the Mendicant Friars, who, according to the celebrated Grostête, 'illuminated our whole country with the light of their preaching and learning.' The Franciscans and Dominicans reached England in 1224, and were established at Oxford within two years afterwards, where the Grey Friars of St. Francis soon obtained as great a predominance as the Dominicans or Black Friars had gained in the University of Paris. St. Francis himself had set his face against literature. Professor Brewer pointed out in the *Monumenta Franciscana* that his followers were expected to be poor in heart and understanding: 'total absolute poverty secured this, but it was incompatible with the possession of books or the necessary materials for study.' Even Roger Bacon, when he joined the Friars, was forbidden to retain his books and instruments, and was not allowed to touch ink or parchment without a special licence from the Pope. We may quote one or two of the anecdotes about the Saint. A brother was arguing with him on the text 'Take nothing with you on the way,' and asked if it meant 'absolutely nothing'; 'Nothing,' said the Saint, 'except the frock allowed by our rule, and, if indispensable, a pair of shoes.' 'What am I to do?' said the brother: 'I have books of my own,' naming a value of many pounds of silver. 'I will not, I ought not, I cannot allow it,' was the reply. A novice applied to St. Francis for leave to

possess a psalter: but the Saint said, 'When you have got a psalter, then you'll want a breviary, and when you have got a breviary you will sit in a chair as great as a lord, and will say to some brother, Friar! go and fetch me my breviary!' And he laid ashes on his head, and repeated, 'I am your breviary! I am your breviary!' till the novice was dumbfounded and amazed; and then again the Saint said that he also had once been tempted to possess books, and he almost yielded to the request, but decided in the end that such yielding would be sinful. He hoped that the day would come when men would throw their books out of the window as rubbish.

A curious change took place when the Mendicants got control of the schools. It was absolutely necessary that they should be the devourers of books if they were to become the monopolists of learning. In the century following their arrival, Fitz-Ralph, the Archbishop of Armagh, complained that his chaplains could not buy any books at Oxford, because they were all snapped up by the men of the cord and cowl: 'Every brother who keeps a school has a huge collection, and in each Convent of Freres is a great and noble library.' The Grey Friars certainly had two houses full of books in School Street, and their brothers in London had a good library, which was in later times increased and richly endowed by Sir Richard Whittington, the book-loving Lord Mayor of London.

There were some complaints that the Friars cared

too much for the contents and too little for the condition of their volumes. The Carmelites, who arrived in England after the two greater Orders, had the reputation of being careful librarians, 'anxiously protecting their books against dust and worms,' and ranging the manuscripts in their large room at Oxford at first in chests and afterwards in book-cases. The Franciscans were too ready to give and sell, to lend and spend, the volumes that they were so keen to acquire. A Dominican was always drawn with a book in his hand; but he would care nothing for it, if it contained no secrets of science. Richard de Bury had much to say about the Friars in that treatise on the love of books, 'which he fondly named *Philobiblon*,' being a commendation of Wisdom and of the books wherein she dwells. The Friars, he said, had preserved the ancient stores of learning, and were always ready to procure the last sermon from Rome or the newest pamphlet from Oxford. When he visited their houses in the country-towns, and turned out their chests and book-shelves, he found such wealth as might have lain in kings' treasuries; 'in those cupboards and baskets are not merely the crumbs that fall from the table, but the shew-bread which is angel's food, and corn from Egypt and the choicest gifts of Sheba.' He gives the highest praise to the Preachers or Friars of the Dominican Order, as being most open and ungrudging, 'and overflowing with a with a kind of divine liberality.' But both Preachers and Minorites, or Grey Friars, had been his pupils,

his friends and guests in his family, and they had always applied themselves with unwearied zeal to the task of editing, indexing, and cataloguing the volumes in the library. 'These men,' he cries, 'are the successors of Bezaleel and the embroiderers of the ephod and breast-plate: these are the husbandmen that sow, and the oxen that tread out the corn: they are the blowers of the trumpets: they are the shining Pleiades and the stars in their courses.'

Brother Agnellus of Pisa was the first Franciscan missionary at Oxford, and the first Minister of the Order in this county. He set up a school for poor students, at which Bishop Grostête was the first reader or master; but we are told that he afterwards felt great regret when he found his Friars bestowing their time upon frivolous learning. 'One day, when he wished to see what proficiency they were making, he entered the school while a disputation was going on, and they were wrangling and debating about the existence of the Deity. "Woe is me! Woe is me!" he burst forth: "the simple brethren are entering heaven, and the learned ones are debating if there be one"; and he sent at once a sum of £10 sterling to the Court to buy a copy of the Decretals, that the Friars might study them and give over their frivolities.' The great difficulty was to prevent the brethren from studying the doctrine of Aristotle, as it was to be found in vile Latin translations, instead of attending to Grostête, who was said to know 'a hundred thousand times more than Aristotle' on all his subjects.



Grostête himself spent very large sums in importing Greek books. In this he was helped by John Basingstoke, who had himself studied at Athens, and who taught the Greek language to several of the monks at St. Alban's. Grostête upheld the eastern doctrines against the teaching of the Papal Court, and indeed was nicknamed 'the hammerer of the Romans.' He based many of his statements upon books which he valued as his choicest possessions; but some of them, such as the *Testament of the Patriarchs* and the *Decretals of Dionysius* are now admitted to be forgeries. On Grostête's death in 1253 he bequeathed his library, rich in marginal commentaries and annotations, to the Friars for whom he had worked before he became Bishop and Chancellor. Some generations afterwards their successors sold many of the books to Dr. Gascoigne, who used to work on them at the Minorites' Library: and some of those which he bought found their way to the libraries of Balliol, Oriel, and Lincoln; the main body of Grostête's books was gradually dispersed by gifts and sales, and dwindled down to little or nothing; so that, when Leland paid his official visit after the suppression of the monasteries, he found very few books of any kind, but plenty of dust and cobwebs, 'and moths and beetles swarming over the empty shelves.'

It has been said that Richard de Bury had not much depth of learning; and it has been a favourite theory for many years that his book might have



been written for him by his secretary, the Dominican Robert Holkot. The matter is not very important, since it is certain, in spite of ancient and modern detractors, that Richard de Bury or 'Aungerville' was a most ardent bibliophile and a very devoted attendant in the 'Library of Wisdom.' He was the son of Sir Richard Aungerville, a knight of Suffolk; but in accordance with a fashion of the day he was usually called after his birthplace. He was born at Bury St. Edmunds in the year 1287: he was educated at Oxford, and afterwards took a prominent part in the civil troubles, taking the side of Queen Isabel and Edward of Windsor against the unfortunate Edward II. He was appointed tutor to the Prince, and soon afterwards became the receiver of his revenues in Wales. When the Queen fled to her own country, Richard followed with a large sum of money, collected by virtue of his office; and he had a narrow escape for his life, being chased by a troop of English lancers as far as Paris itself, where he lay concealed for a week in the belfry of the Minorites' Church. When his pupil came to the throne many lucrative offices were showered on his faithful friend. Richard became Cofferer and Treasurer of the Wardrobe, and for five years was Clerk of the Privy Seal; and during that period he was twice sent as ambassador to the Pope at Avignon, where he had the honour of becoming the friend of Petrarch.

The poet has himself described his meeting with the Englishman travelling in such splendid fashion

to lay before his Holiness his master's claims upon France. 'It was at the time,' says Petrarch, 'when the seeds of war were growing that produced such a blood-stained harvest, in which the sickles are not laid aside nor as yet are the garners closed.' He found in his visitor 'a man of ardent mind and by no means unacquainted with literature.' He discovered indeed that Richard was on some points full of curious learning, and it occurred to him that one born and bred in Britain might know the situation of the long-lost island of Thule. 'But whether he was ashamed of his ignorance,' says Petrarch, 'or whether, as I will not suspect, he grudged information upon the subject, and whether he spoke his real mind or not, he only answered that he would tell me, but not till he had returned home to his books, of which no man had a more abundant supply.' The poet complains that the answer never came, in spite of many letters of reminder; 'and so my friendship with a Briton never taught me anything more about the Isle of Thule.'

Richard was consecrated Bishop of Durham in 1333, after an amicable struggle between the Pope and the King as to the hand that should bestow the preferment. A few months afterwards he became High Treasurer, and in the same year was appointed Lord Chancellor. Within the next three years he was sent on several embassies to France to urge the English claims, and he afterwards went on the same business to Flanders and Brabant. He writes with

a kind of rapture of his first expeditions to Paris ; in later years he complained that the study of antiquities was superseding science, in which the doctors of the Sorbonne had excelled. 'I was sent first to the Papal Chair, and afterwards to the Court of France, and thence to other countries, on tedious embassies and in perilous times, bearing with me all the time that love of books which many waters could not extinguish.' 'Oh Lord of Lords in Zion!' he ejaculates, 'what a flood of pleasure rejoiced my heart when I reached Paris, the earthly Paradise. How I longed to remain there, and to my ardent soul how few and short seemed the days! There are the libraries in their chambers of spice, the lawns wherein every growth of learning blooms. There the meads of Academe shake to the footfall of the philosophers as they pace along: there are the peaks of Parnassus, and there is the Stoic Porch. Here you will find Aristotle, the overseer of learning, to whom belongs in his own right all the excellent knowledge that remains in this transitory world. Here Ptolemy weaves his cycles and epicycles, and here Gensachar tracks the planets' courses with his figures and charts. Here it was in very truth that with open treasure-chest and purse untied I scattered my money with a light heart, and ransomed the priceless volumes with my dust and dross.'

He shows, as he himself confessed, an ecstatic love for his books. 'These are the masters that teach without rods and stripes, without angry words, with-

out demanding a fee in money or in kind: if you draw near, they sleep not: if you ask, they answer in full: if you are mistaken, they neither rail nor laugh at your ignorance.' 'You only, my books!' he cries, 'are free and unfettered: you only can give to all who ask and enfranchise all that serve you.' In his glowing periods they become transfigured into the wells of living water, the fatness of the olive, the sweetness of the vines of Engaddi; they seem to him like golden urns in which the manna was stored, like the fruitful tree of life and the four-fold river of Eden.

Richard de Bury had more books than all the other bishops in England. He set up several permanent libraries in his manor-houses and at his palace in Auckland; the floor of his hall was always so strewn with manuscripts that it was hard to approach his presence, and his bedroom so full of books that one could not go in or out, or even stand still without treading on them. He has told us many particulars about his methods of collection. He had lived with scholars from his youth upwards; but it was not until he became the King's friend, and almost a member of his family, that he was able 'to hunt in the delightful coverts' of the clerical and monastic libraries. As Chancellor he had great facilities for 'dragging the books from their hiding-places'; 'a flying rumour had spread on all sides that we longed for books, and especially for old ones, and that it was easier to gain our favour by a manuscript than by gifts of coin.' As he had the power of promoting



SEAL OF RICHARD DE BURY.



and deposing whom he pleased, the 'crazy quartos and tottering folios' came creeping in as gifts instead of the ordinary fees and New Year's presents. The book-cases of the monasteries were opened, and their caskets unclasped, and the volumes that had lain for ages in the sepulchres were roused by the light of day. 'I might have had,' he said, 'abundance of wealth in those days ; but it was books, and not bags of gold, that I wanted ; I preferred folios to florins, and loved a little thin pamphlet more than an over-fed palfrey.' We know that he bought many books on his embassies to France and Flanders, besides his constant purchases at home. He tells us that the Friars were his best agents ; they would compass sea and land to meet his desire. 'With such eager huntsmen, what leveret could lie hid ? With such fishermen, what single little fish could escape the net, the hook, and the trawl ?' He found another source of supply in the country schools, where the masters were always ready to sell their books ; and in these little gardens and paddocks, as chances occurred, he culled a few flowers or gathered a few neglected herbs. His money secured the services of the librarians and bookstall-men on the Continent, who were afraid of no journey by land, and were deterred by no fury of the sea. 'Moreover,' he added, 'we always had about us a multitude of experts and copyists, with binders, and correctors, and illuminators, and all who were in any way qualified for the service of books.' He ends his chapter on book-

collecting with a reference to an eastern tale, comparing himself to the mountain of loadstone that attracted the ships of knowledge by a secret force, while the books in their cargoes, like the iron bars in the story, were streaming towards the magnetic cliff 'in a multifarious flight.'



## CHAPTER IV.

### ITALY—THE AGE OF PETRARCH.

THE enlightenment of an age of ignorance cannot be attributed to any single person; yet it has been said with some justice, that as the mediæval darkness lifted, one figure was seen standing in advance, and that Petrarch was rightly hailed as 'the harbinger of day.' His fame rests not so much on his poems as upon his incessant labours in the task of educating his countrymen. Petrarch was devoted to books from his boyhood. His youth was passed near Avignon, 'on the banks of the windy Rhone.' After receiving the ordinary instruction in grammar and rhetoric, he passed four years at Montpellier, and proceeded to study law at Bologna. 'I kept my terms in Civil Law,' he said, 'and made some progress; but I gave up the subject on becoming my own master, not because I disliked the Law, which no doubt is full of the Roman learning, but because it is so often perverted by evil-minded men.' He seems to have worked for a time under his friend Cino of Pistoia, and to have attended the lectures of the jurist Andrea, whose daughter Novella is said to have sometimes taken the class 'with a little curtain in front of her beautiful face.' While studying at

Bologna, Petrarch made his first collection of books instead of devoting himself to the Law. His old father once paid him a visit and began burning the parchments on a funeral pile: the boy's supplications and promises saved the poor remainder. He tried hard to follow his father's practical advice, but always in vain; 'Nature called him in another direction, and it is idle to struggle against her.'

On Petrarch's return to Avignon he obtained the friendship of Cardinal Colonna: and here the whole course of his life was fixed when he first saw Laura 'in a green dress embroidered with violets.' Her face was stamped upon his mind, and haunted him through all efforts at repose: and perhaps it is to her influence that he owed his rank among the lyrical poets and the crown bestowed at Rome. His whole life was thenceforth devoted to the service of the book. He declared that he had the writing-disease, and was the victim of a general epidemic. 'All the world is taking up the writer's part, which ought to be confined to a few: the number of the sick increases and the disease becomes daily more virulent.' A victim of the mania himself, he laughs at his own misfortune: yet it might have been better, he thought, to have been a labourer or a weaver at the loom. 'There are several kinds of melancholia: and some madmen will write books, just as others toss pebbles in their hands.' As for literary fame, it is but a harvest of thin air, 'and it is only fit for sailors to watch a breeze and to whistle for a wind.'

Petrarch collected books in many parts of Europe. In 1329, when he was twenty-five years of age, he made a tour through Switzerland to the cities of Flanders. The Flemish schools had lost something of their ancient fame since the development of the University of Paris. Several fine collections of books were still preserved in the monasteries. The Abbey of Laubes was especially rich in biblical commentaries and other works of criticism, which were all destroyed afterwards in a fire, except a Vulgate of the eighth century that happened to be required for use at the Council of Trent. Petrarch described his visit to Liège in a letter to a friend; 'When we arrived I heard that there was a good supply of books, so I kept all my party there until I had one oration of Cicero transcribed by a colleague, and another in my own writing, which I afterwards published in Italy; but in that fair city of the barbarians it was very difficult to get any ink, and what I did procure was as yellow as saffron.'

A few years afterwards he went from Avignon to Paris, and was astonished at the net-work of filthy lanes in the students' quarter. It was a paradise of books, all kept at fair prices by the University's decree; but the traveller declared that, except in 'the world's sink' at Avignon, he had never seen so dirty a place. At Rome he was dismayed to find that all the books were the prey of the foreigner. The English and French merchants were carrying away what had been spared by the Goths and

Vandals. 'Are you not ashamed,' he cried to his Roman friends, 'are you not ashamed that your avarice should allow these strangers every day to acquire some remnant of your ancient majesty?'

He used to pore over his manuscripts on the most incongruous occasions, like Pliny reading his critical notes at the boar-hunt. 'Whether I am being shaved or having my hair cut,' he wrote, 'and whether I am riding or dining, I either read or get some one to read to me.' Some of his favourite volumes are described in terms of delightful affection. He tells us how Homer and Plato sat side by side on the shelf,—the prince of poets by the prince of philosophers. He only knew the rudiments of Greek, and was forced to read the Iliad in the Latin version. 'But I glory,' he said, 'in the sight of my illustrious guests, and have at least the pleasure of seeing the Greeks in their national costume.' 'Homer,' he adds, 'is dumb, or I am deaf; I am delighted with his looks; and as often as I embrace the silent volume I cry, "Oh illustrious bard, how gladly would I listen to thy song, if only I had not lost my hearing, through the death of one friend and the lamented absence of another!"'

In his treatise on Fortune, Petrarch has left us a study on book-collecting in the form of a dialogue between his natural genius and his critical reason. He argues, as it were, in his own person against the imaginary opponent. A paraphrase will show the nature and the result of the contest.

*Petrarch.* I have indeed a great quantity of books.

*Critic.* That gives me an excellent instance. Some men amass books for self-instruction and others from vanity. Some decorate their rooms with the furniture that was intended to be an ornament of the soul, as if it were like the bronzes and statues of which we were speaking. Some are working for their own vile ends behind their rows of books, and these are the worst of all, because they esteem literature merely as merchandise, and not at its real value ; and this new fashionable infliction becomes another engine for the arts of avarice.

*Pet.* I have a very considerable quantity of books.

*Crit.* Well ! it is a charming, embarrassing kind of luggage, affording an agreeable diversion for the mind.

*Pet.* I have a great abundance of books.

*Crit.* Yes, and a great abundance of hard work and a great lack of repose. You have to keep your mind marching in all directions, and to overload your memory. Books have led some to learning, and others to madness, when they swallow more than they can digest. In the mind, as in the body, indigestion does more harm than hunger ; food and books alike must be used according to the constitution, and what is little enough for one is too much for another.

*Pet.* But I have an immense quantity of books.

*Crit.* Immense is that which has no measure, and without measure there is nothing convenient or decent in the affairs of men.

*Pet.* I have an incalculable number of books.

*Crit.* Have you more than Ptolemy, King of Egypt, accumulated in the library at Alexandria, which were all burned at one time? Perhaps there was an excuse for him in his royal wealth and his desire to benefit posterity. But what are we to say of the private citizens who have surpassed the luxury of kings? Have we not read of Serenus Sammonicus, the master of many languages, who bequeathed 62,000 volumes to the younger Gordian? Truly that was a fine inheritance, enough to sustain many souls or to oppress one to death, as all will agree. If Serenus had done nothing else in his life, and had not read a word in all those volumes, would he not have had enough to do in learning their titles and sizes and numbers and their authors' names? Here you have a science that turns a philosopher into a librarian. This is not feeding the soul with wisdom: it is the crushing it under a weight of riches or torturing it in the waters of Tantalus.

*Pet.* I have innumerable books.

*Crit.* Yes, and innumerable errors of ignorant authors and of the copyists who corrupt all that they touch.

*Pet.* I have a good provision of books.

*Crit.* What does that matter, if your intellect cannot take them in? Do you remember the Roman Sabinus who plumed himself on the learning of his slaves? Some people think that they must know what is in their own books, and say, when a new

subject is started : 'I have a book about that in my library!' They think that this is quite sufficient, just as if the book were in their heads, and then they raise their eyebrows, and there is an end of the subject.

*Pet.* I am overflowing with books.

*Crit.* Why don't you overflow with talent and eloquence? Ah! but these things are not for sale, like books, and if they were I don't suppose there would be many buyers, for books do make a covering for the walls, but those other wares are only clothing for the soul, and are invisible and therefore neglected.

*Pet.* I have books which help me in my studies.

*Crit.* Take care that they do not prove a hindrance. Many a general has been beaten by having too many troops. If books came in like recruits one would not turn them away, but would stow them in proper quarters, and use the best of them, taking care not to bring up a force too soon which would be more useful on another occasion.

*Pet.* I have a great variety of books.

*Crit.* A variety of paths will often deceive the traveller.

*Pet.* I have collected a number of fine books.

*Crit.* To gain glory by means of books you must not only possess them but know them ; their lodging must be in your brain and not on the book-shelf.

*Pet.* I keep a few beautiful books.

*Crit.* Yes, you keep in irons a few prisoners, who, if they could escape and talk, would have you indicted



for wrongful imprisonment. But now they lie groaning in their cells, and of this they ever complain, that an idle and a greedy man is overflowing with the wealth that might have sustained a multitude of starving scholars.'

Petrarch was in truth a careless custodian of his prisoners. He was too ready to lend a book to a friend, and his generosity on one occasion caused a serious loss to literature. The only known copy of a treatise by Cicero was awaiting transcription in his library ; but he allowed it to be carried off by an old scholar in need of assistance : it was pledged in some unknown quarter, and nothing was ever heard again of the precious deposit.

He returned to Avignon in 1337, and made himself a quiet home at Vaucluse. His letters are full of allusions to his little farm, to the poplars in the horse-shoe valley, and the river brimming out from the 'monarch of springs.' In these new lawns of Helicon he made a new home for his books, and tried to forget in their company the tumults that had driven him from Italy. In 1340 he received offers of a laureate's crown from Rome, the capital of the world, and from Paris, 'the birth-place of learning.' 'I start to-day,' he wrote to Colonna, 'to receive my reward over the graves of those who were the pride of ancient Rome, and in the very theatre of their exploits.' The Capitol resounded to such cheers that its walls and 'antique dome' seemed to share in the public joy : the senator placed a chaplet on his



brow, and old Stephen Colonna added a few words of praise amid the applause of the Roman people.

At Parma, soon afterwards, Petrarch formed another library which he called his 'second Parnassus.' At Padua he busied himself in the education of an adopted son, the young John of Ravenna, who lived to be a celebrated professor, and was nicknamed 'the Trojan Horse,' because he turned out so many excellent Grecians. In a cottage near Milan the poet received a visit from Boccaccio, who was at that time inclined to renounce the world. He offered to give his whole library to Petrarch: he did afterwards send to his host a *Dante* of his own copying, which is now preserved in the Vatican. The approach of a pestilence led Petrarch to remove his home to Venice: and here he was again visited by Boccaccio, this time in company with Leontio Pilato, a Calabrian Greek trading in books between Italy and Constantinople.

Leontio was the translator of Homer, and expounded his poems from the Chair of Rhetoric at Florence. He was a man of forbidding appearance, and 'more obdurate,' said Petrarch, 'than the rocks that he will encounter in his voyage': 'fearing that I might catch his bad temper, I let him go, and gave him a Terence to amuse him on the way, though I do not know what this melancholy Greek could have in common with that lively African.' Leontio was killed by lightning on his return voyage; and there was much anxiety until it could be ascertained that his literary stock-in-trade had been rescued from the

hands of the sailors. It was not till the end of the century that Chrysoloras renewed the knowledge of the classics: but we may regard the austere Leontio as the chief precursor of the crowd of later immigrants, each with a gem, or bronze, or 'a brown Greek manuscript' for sale, and all eager to play their parts in the restoration of learning.

Towards the end of his life Petrarch became tired of carrying his books about. When he broke up the libraries at Parma and Vacluse he had formed the habit of travelling with bales of manuscripts in a long cavalcade; but he determined afterwards to offer the collection to Venice, on condition that it should be properly housed, and should never be sold or divided. The offer was accepted by the Republic, and the Palazzo Molina was assigned as a home for the poet and his books. Petrarch, however, had other plans for himself. He wished to be near Padua, where he held a canonry; and he accordingly built himself a cottage at Arquà, among the Euganean Hills, about ten miles from the city. A few olive-trees and a little vine-yard sufficed for the wants of his modest household; and there, as he wrote to his brother, broken in body but easy in his mind, he passed his time in reading, and prepared for his end. His only regret was that there was no monastery near in which he might see his beloved Gerard fulfilling his religious duties. He seems to have given up his love for fine books with other worldly vanities. He offers excuses for the plain appearance of a volume of 'St. Augustine'

which he was sending as a present. 'One must not,' said he, 'expect perfect manuscripts from scholars who are engaged on better things. A general does not sharpen the soldiers' swords. Apelles did not cut out his own boards, or Polycletus his sheets of ivory; some humble person always prepares the material on which a higher mind is to be engaged. So is it with books: some polish the parchment, and others copy or correct the text; others again do the illumination, to use the common phrase; but a loftier spirit will disdain these menial occupations.' The scholar's books are often of a rough and neglected appearance, for abundance of anything makes the owner 'careless and secure'; it is the invalid who is particular about every breath of air, but the strong man loves the rough breeze. 'As to this book of the *Confessions*, its first aspect will teach you all about it. Quite new, quite unadorned, untouched by the corrector's fangs, it comes out of my young servant's hands. You will notice some defects in spelling, but no gross mistakes. In a word, you will perhaps find things in it which will exercise but not disturb your understanding. Read it then, and ponder upon it. This book, which would enflame a heart of ice, must set your ardent soul on fire.'

On a summer night of the year 1374, Petrarch died peacefully at Arquà, alone in his library. His few remaining books were sold, and some of them may still be seen in Rome and Paris. Those which he had given to Venice suffered a strange reverse of

fortune. How long the gift remained in the Palazzo Molina we cannot tell. We conjecture that it was discarded in the next century, before Bessarion presented his Greek books to the senate, and became the actual founder of the library of St. Mark. The antiquary Tomasini found Petrarch's books cast aside in a dark room behind the Horses of Lysippus. Some had crumbled into powder, and others had been glued into shapeless masses by the damp. The survivors were placed in the Libreria Vecchia, and are now in the Ducal Palace; but it was long before they were permitted to enter the building that sheltered the gift of Bessarion.

## CHAPTER V.

### OXFORD—DUKE HUMPHREY'S BOOKS—THE LIBRARY OF THE VALOIS.

THE University Library at Oxford was a development of Richard de Bury's foundation. The monks of Durham had founded a hall, now represented by Trinity College, in which Richard had always taken a fatherly interest. He provided the ordinary texts and commentaries for the students, and was extremely anxious that they should be instructed in Greek and in the languages of the East. A knowledge of Arabic, he thought, was as necessary for the study of astronomy as a familiarity with Hebrew was requisite for the understanding of the Scriptures. The Friars had bought a good supply of Hebrew books when the Jews were expelled from England ; Richard not only increased the available store, but supplied the means of using it. 'We have provided,' he said, 'a grammar in Greek and Hebrew for the scholars, with all the proper aids to instruct them in reading and writing those languages.' He formed the ambitious design of providing assistance to the whole University out of the books presented to the hall. The rules which he drew up were not unlike those already in use at the Sorbonne. Five students were chosen as wardens,

of whom any three might be a quorum for lending the manuscripts. Any book, of which they possessed a duplicate, might be lent out on proper security: but copying was not allowed, and no volume was on any account to be carried beyond the suburbs. A yearly account was to be taken of the books in store, and of the current securities; and if any profit should come to the wardens' hands it was to be applied to the maintenance of the library.

When the Bishop died some of his books went back to Durham; but the monks were generous towards the hall, and on several occasions sent fresh supplies to Oxford. It may also be observed that some of his best MSS. were returned to the Abbey of St. Alban's. He had bought about thirty volumes from a former abbot for fifty pounds weight of silver; but the monks had continually protested against a transaction which they believed to be illegal, and on Richard's death some of the books were given back, and others were purchased by Abbot Wentmore from his executors.

De Bury's generous care for learning was imitated in several quarters. A few years after his death the Lady Elizabeth de Burgh made a bequest of a small but very costly library to her College of Clare Hall at Cambridge. Guy Earl of Warwick about the same time gave a collection of illuminated romances to the monks of Bordesley. John de Newton in the next generation divided his collection of classics, histories, and service-books, between St. Peter's College at Cambridge and the Minster at York, where he had acted

for some years as treasurer. The lending-library at Durham Hall was the only provision for the public, with the exception of a few volumes kept in the 'chest with four keys' at St. Mary's. Thomas Cobham, Bishop of Worcester, had long been anxious to show his filial love for the University: as early as the year 1320 he had begun to prepare a room for a library 'over the old congregation-house in the north churchyard of St. Mary's'; and, though the work was left incomplete, he gave all his books by will to be placed at the disposal of the whole body of scholars. Owing to disputes that arose between the University and the College to which Cobham had belonged, the gift did not take effect until 1367. The University Library was established in the upper room, which was used as a Convocation House in later times; it is said not to have been completely furnished until the year 1409, more than eighty years after the date of the Bishop's benefaction. According to the first statute for the regulation of Cobham's Library, the best of the books were to be sold so as to raise a sum of £40, which according to the current rate of interest would produce a yearly income of £3 for the librarian; the other books, together with those from the University Chest, were to be chained to the desks for the general use of the students. It was soon found necessary to exclude the 'noisy rabble': and permission to work in the library was restricted to graduates of eight years' standing. Richard de Bury had warned the world in his chapter upon the handling

of books, how hardly could a raw youth be made to take care of a manuscript; the student, according to the great bibliophile, would treat a book as roughly as if it were a pair of shoes, would stick in straws to keep his place, or stuff it with violets and rose-leaves, and would very likely eat fruit or cheese over one page and set a cup of ale on the other. An impudent boy would scribble across the text, the copyist would try his pen on a blank space, a scullion would turn the pages with unwashed hands, or a thief might cut out the fly-leaves and margins to use in writing his letters; 'and all these various negligences,' he adds, 'are wonderfully injurious to books.'

A generous benefactor gave a copy of De Lyra's 'Commentaries,' which was set upon a desk in St. Mary's Chancel for reference. A large gift of books came from Richard Courteney, the Chancellor of the University; and as a mark of gratitude he was allowed free access to the library during the rest of his life. Among the other benefactors whose good deeds are still commemorated we find King Henry IV., who helped to complete the library, his successor Henry V., who contributed to its endowment as Prince of Wales, and his brothers John Duke of Bedford and Humphrey Duke of Gloucester; and the roll of a later date includes the names of Edmund Earl of March, Philip Repington Bishop of Lincoln, and the munificent Archbishop Arundel.

The good Duke Humphrey has been called 'the first founder of the University Library.' We know



from the records of that time that his gifts were acknowledged to be 'an almost unspeakable blessing.' He sent in all about three hundred volumes during his life, which were placed in the chests of Cobham's Library as they arrived, to be transferred to the new Divinity Schools as soon as room could be made for the whole collection. He had intended to bequeath as many more by way of an additional endowment, but died intestate: and there was a considerable delay before the University could procure the fulfilment of his charitable design. When the books at last arrived 'the general joy knew no bounds'; and the title of 'Duke Humphrey's Library' was gratefully given to the whole assemblage of books which from several different quarters had come into the University's possession.

The catalogue shows that the Duke's store had consisted mainly of the writings of the Fathers and Arabian works on science: there were a few classics, including a Quintilian, and Aristotle and Plato in Latin: the works of Capgrave and Higden were the only English chronicles; but the Duke was a devotee of the Italian learning, and his gifts to Oxford included more than one copy of the *Divina Commedia*, three separate copies of *Boccaccio*, and no less than seven of *Petrarch*.

The fate of the libraries founded by De Bury and Duke Humphrey of Gloucester was to perish at the hands of the mob. Bishop Bale has told the sad story of the destruction of the monastic libraries.



THE DUKE OF BEDFORD PRAYING BEFORE ST. GEORGE.

*(From the "Bedford Missal.")*

by Leonardo Aretino, with an original dedication to the Duke. The third is a magnificent volume of *Valerius Maximus* prepared, as we know from the monastic annals, under the personal supervision of Abbot Whethamstede, the 'passionate bibliomaniac' of St. Alban's. It contains inscriptions, says Mr. Macray, recording its gift for the use of the scholars, with anathemas upon all who should injure it. 'If any one steals this book,' says the Abbot, 'may he come to the gallows or the rope of Judas.'

Many of the Duke of Gloucester's books had come to him from the library of the French Kings at the Louvre, which had been purchased and dispersed by John, Duke of Bedford. The Duke himself was in the habit of ordering magnificently illuminated books of devotion, which he gave as presents to his friends. The famous 'Bedford Missal' (really a Book of Hours) was offered by the Duchess in his name to Henry VI.; and Mr. Quaritch possesses another Book of Hours, which the Duke presented to Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury, as a wedding gift. The House of Valois was always friendly to literature. King John, who fought at Crécy, began a small collection: he had the story of the Crusades, a tract on the game of chess, and a book containing a French version of *Livy*, which seems to have belonged afterwards to Duke Humphrey, and to have found its way later into the Abbey of St. Geneviève. His son Charles le Sage was the owner of about 900 volumes, which he kept in his castle at the Louvre.

The first librarian was Gilles Malet, who prepared a catalogue in 1373, which is still in existence. Another was compiled a few years afterwards by Antoine des Essars, and a third was made for Bedford when he purchased about 850 volumes out of the collection in the year 1423. These lists were so carefully executed that we can form a very clear idea of the library itself and the books in their gay bindings on the shelves. We are told that the King was so devoted to his '*Belle Assemblée*,' as Christina of Pisa calls it, that not only authors and booksellers, but the princes and nobles at the court, all vied in making offerings of finely illuminated manuscripts.

They were arranged in the three rooms of the Library Tower. The wainscots were of Irish yew, and the ceilings of cypress. The windows were filled with painted glass, and the rooms were lit at night with thirty chandeliers and a great silver lamp. On entering the lowest room the visitor saw a row of book-cases low enough to be used as desks or tables. A few musical instruments lay about ; one of the old lists tells us of a lute, and guitars inlaid with ivory and enamel, and 'an old rebec' much out of repair. There were 269 volumes in the book-cases. We will only mention a few of the most remarkable. There was Queen Blanche's Bible in red morocco, and another in white boards, Thomas Waley's rhymes from Ovid with splendid miniatures, and Richard de Furnival's *Bestiaire d'Amour*. One life of St. Louis

stood in a '*chemise blanche*,' and another in cloth of gold. St. Gregory and Sir John Mandeville were clothed in indigo velvet. John of Salisbury had a silk coat and long girdle, and most of the Arabians were in tawny silk ornamented with white roses and wreaths of foliage. Some bindings are noticed as being in fine condition, and others as being shabby or faded. The clasps are minutely described. They would catch a visitor's eye as the books lay flat on the shelves: and we suppose that the librarian intended to show the best way of knowing the books apart rather than to dwell on their external attractions. The Oxford fashion was to catalogue according to the last word on the first leaf, or the first word over the page; but it was also a common custom to distinguish important volumes by such names as *The Red Book of the Exchequer*, or *The Black Book of Carnarvon*.

We need not proceed to describe the other rooms. On the first floor there were 260 books, consisting for the most part of romances with miniature illuminations. One of these was the *Destruction de Thèbes*, which at one time belonged to the Duc de la Vallière, and is now in the National Library at Paris. The upper floor contained nearly six hundred volumes mostly concerned with astronomy and natural science.

It appears from the memoranda in the lists that there had been a habit of lending books to public institutions and to members of the royal family from

the time when the library was first established ; and it is estimated that about two hundred of the books must have been saved in this way to form the beginning of a new library in the Louvre, which, after the expulsion of the English, began to attain some importance in the reign of Louis XI.

## CHAPTER VI.

### ITALY—THE RENAISSANCE.

THE study of the classics had languished for a time after the deaths of Petrarch and Boccaccio. It revived again upon the coming of Chrysoloras, who is said to have lighted in Italy 'a new and perpetual flame.' Poggio Bracciolini was one of his first pupils; and he became so distinguished in literature that the earlier part of the fifteenth century is known as the age of Poggio. Leonardo Aretino describes the enthusiasm with which the Italians made acquaintance with the ancient learning. 'I gave myself up to Chrysoloras,' he writes, 'and my passion for knowledge was so strong that the daily tasks became the material of my nightly dreams.' He told Cosmo de' Medici, when translating Plato's Dialogues, that they alone seemed to be infused with real life, while all other books passed by like fleeting and shadowy things.

We are chiefly concerned with Poggio as the discoverer of long-lost treasures. He saved Quintilian and many other classics from complete extinction. 'Some of them,' said his friend Barbaro, 'were already dead to the world, and some after a long exile you have restored to their rights as citizens.' As a famous stock of pears had been named after an



Appius or Claudius, so it was said that these new fruits of literature ought certainly to be named after Poggio.

The sole remaining copy of an ancient work upon aqueducts was discovered by him in the old library at Monte Cassino, which had survived the assaults of Lombards and Saracens, but in that later age seemed likely to perish by neglect. We have the record of an earlier visit by Boccaccio, in which the carelessness of its guardians was revealed. The visitor, we are told, asked very deferentially if he might see the library. 'It is open, and you can go up,' said a monk, pointing to the ladder that led to an open loft. The traveller describes the filthy and doorless chamber, the grass growing on the window-sills, and the books and benches white with dust. He took down book after book, and they all seemed to be ancient and valuable; but from some of them whole sheets had been taken out, and in others the margins of the vellum had been cut off. All in tears at this miserable sight, Boccaccio went down the ladder, and asked a monk in the cloister how those precious volumes had come to such a pass; and the monk told him that the brothers who wanted a few pence would take out a quire of leaves to make a little psalter for sale, and used to cut off the margins to make 'briefs,' which they sold to the women.

Poggio himself has described his discovery at the Abbey of St. Gall. 'By good fortune,' he says, 'we were at Constance without anything to do, and it



occurred to us to go to the monastery about twenty miles off to see the place where the Quintilian was shut up.' The Abbey had been founded by the Irish missionaries who destroyed the idols of Suabia, when according to the ancient legend the mountain-demon vainly called on the spirit of the lake to join in resisting the foe. Its library had been celebrated in the ninth century, when the Hungarian terror fell upon Europe, and the barbarian armies in one and the same day 'laid in ashes the monastery of St. Gall and the city of Bremen on the shores of the Northern ocean'; but the books had been fortunately removed to the Abbey of Reichenau 'on an island in the Rhine. 'We went to the place,' said Poggio, 'to amuse ourselves and to look at the books. Among them we found the Quintilian safe and sound, but all coated with dust. The books were by no means housed as they deserved, but were all in a dark and noisome place at the foot of a tower, into which one would not cast a criminal condemned to death.' He describes the finding of several other rare MSS., and says: 'I have copied them all out in great haste, and have sent them to Florence.'

In 1418 he visited England in the train of Cardinal Beaufort. He said that he was unable to procure any transcripts, though he visited some of the principal libraries, and must have seen that the collection at the Grey Friars at least was 'well stocked with books.' He was more successful on the Continent, where he brought the *History* of Ammianus out

of a German prison into the free air of the republic of letters. He gave the original to Cardinal Colonna, and wrote to Aretino about transcripts : ' Niccolo has copied it on paper for Cosmo de' Medici : you must write to Carlo Aretino for another copy, or he might lend you the original, because if the scribe should be an ignoramus you might get a fable instead of a history.'

Among the pupils of Chrysoloras, Guarini of Verona was esteemed the keenest philologist, and John Aurispa as having the most extended knowledge of the classics. Aurispa, says Hallam, came rather late from Sicily, but his labours were not less profitable than those of his predecessors ; in the year 1423 he brought back from Greece considerably more than two hundred MSS. of authors hardly known in Italy ; and the list includes books of Plato, of Pindar, and of Strabo, of which all knowledge had been lost in the West. Aurispa lectured for many years at Bologna and Florence, and ended his days at the literary Court of Ferrara. Philelpho was one of the most famous of the scholars who returned ' laden with manuscripts' from Greece. To recover a lost poem or oration was to go far on the road to fortune, and a very moderate acquaintance with the text was expected from the hero of the fortunate adventure. When he lectured on his new discoveries at Florence, where he had established himself in spite of the Medici, Philelpho according to his own account was treated with such deference on all sides that he

was overwhelmed with bashfulness ; ‘ All the citizens are turning towards me, and all the ladies and the nobles exalt my name to the skies.’ He was the bitter enemy of Poggio, and of all who supported the reigning family of Florence. Poggio had the art of making enemies, though he was a courtier by profession and had been secretary to eight Popes. He raged against Philelpho in a flood of scurrilous pamphlets ; Valla, the great Latin scholar, was violently attacked for a mere word of criticism, and Niccolo Perotti, the grammarian, paid severely for supporting his friend. Poggio was always in extremes. His eulogies in praise of Lorenzo de’ Medici, and Niccolo Niccoli of Florence are perfect in grace and dignity ; his invectives were as scurrilous as anything recorded in the annals of literature.

Two generous benefactors preceded ‘ the father of his country’ in providing libraries for Florence. Niccolo Niccoli by common consent was the great Mæcenæ of his age ; his passion for books was boundless, and he had gathered the best collection that had been seen in Italy for many generations. The public was free to inspect his treasures, and any citizen might either read or transcribe as he pleased ; ‘ In one word,’ wrote Poggio, ‘ I say that he was the wisest and the most benevolent of mankind.’ By his will he appointed sixteen trustees, among whom was Cosmo de’ Medici, to take charge of his books for the State. Some legal difficulty arose after his death, but Cosmo undertook to pay all liabilities if the

management of the library were left to his sole discretion; and the gift of the 'Florentine Socrates' was eventually added to the books which Cosmo had purchased in Italy or had acquired in his Levantine commerce.

Another citizen of Florence had rivalled the generosity of Niccoli. The Chancellor Coluccio Salutati was revered by his countrymen for the majestic flow of his prose and verse. It is true that Tiraboschi considered him to be 'as much like Virgil or Cicero as a monkey resembles a man.' Salutati showed his gratitude to Florence by endowing the city with his splendid library. But in this case also there were difficulties, and again the way was made smooth by the prompt munificence of the Medici. Cosmo himself bought up Greek books in the Levant, and was fortunate in securing some of the best specimens of Byzantine art. His brother Lorenzo, his son Pietro, and Lorenzo the Magnificent in the next generation, all laboured in their turn to adorn the Medicean collection. Politian the poet, and Mirandula, the Phœnix of his age, were the messengers whom the great Lorenzo sent out to gather the spoil; and he only prayed, he said, that they might find such a store of good books that he would be obliged to pawn his furniture to pay for them.

On the flight of the reigning family the 'Medici books' were bought by the Dominicans at St. Mark's; and they rested for some years in Savonarola's home,

stored in the gallery which holds the great choir-books illuminated by Frà Angelico and his companions. In the year 1508 the monks were in pecuniary distress, and were forced to sell the books to Leo X., then Cardinal de' Medici. He took them to Rome to ensure their safety, but was always careful to keep them apart from the official assemblage in the Vatican; it is certain that he would have restored them to Florence, if he had lived a short time longer. The patriotic design was carried out by Clement VII., another member of that book-loving family, and their hereditary treasures at last found a permanent home in the gallery designed by Michelangelo.

The 'Medici books' were catalogued by a humble bell-ringer, who lived to be a chief figure in the literary world. Thomas of Sarzana performed the task so well that his system became a model for librarians. While travelling in attendance on a Legate, the future Pope could never refrain from expensive purchases; to own books, we are told, was his ambition, 'his pride, his pleasure, passion, and avarice'; and he was only saved from ruin by the constant help of his friends. When he succeeded to the tiara as Pope Nicholas V., his influence was felt through Christendom as a new literary force. He encouraged research at home, and gathered the records of antiquity from the ruined cities of the East, and 'the darkest monasteries of Germany and Britain.' His labours resulted in the restoration of

the Vatican Library with an endowment of five thousand volumes; and he found time to complete the galleries for their reception, though he could never hope to finish the rest of the palace. A great part of his work was destroyed in 1527 by the rabble that 'followed the Bourbon' to the sack of Rome; but his institution survived the temporary disaster, and its losses were repaired by the energy of Sixtus v.

Pope Nicholas had no sympathy with the niggardly spirit that would have kept the 'barbarians' in darkness. He opened his Greek treasure-house to the inspection of the whole western world. Looking back to the crowd round his chair at the Lateran or in his house near S<sup>ta</sup>. Maria Maggiore, we recognise a number of familiar figures. Perotti is translating Polybius, and Aurispa explaining the Golden Verses; Guarini enlarges the world's boundaries by publishing the geography of Strabo. An old tract upon the Pope's munificence shows how the Eastern Fathers were restored to a place of honour. Basil and Cyril were translated, and the Pope obtained the *Commentary upon St. Matthew*, of which Erasmus made excellent use in his Paraphrase: it was the book of which Aquinas wrote that he would rather have a copy than be master of the city of Paris. The Pope desired very strongly to read Homer in Latin verse, and had procured a translation of the first book of the Iliad. Hearing that Philelpho had arrived in Rome, he hoped that the work might be finished by a master-hand, and to get a version of

the whole Iliad and Odyssey he gave a large retaining fee, a palazzo, and a farm in the Campagna, and made a deposit of ten thousand pieces of gold to be paid on the completion of the contract.

Joseph Scaliger, the supreme judge in his day of all that related to books, said that of all these men of the Italian renaissance he only envied three. One of course was Pico of Mirandula, a man of marvellous powers, who rose as a mere youth to the highest place as a philosopher and linguist. The next was Politian, equally renowned for hard scholarship and for the sweetness and charm of his voluminous poems. The third was the Greek refugee, Theodore of Gaza, so warmly praised by Erasmus for his versatile talent; no man, it was said, was so skilled in the double task of turning Greek books into Latin, and rendering Latin into Greek.

We should feel inclined to bracket another name with those of the famous trio. George of Trebisond was a faithful expounder of the classics, the discoverer of many a lost treasure, and the author of a whole library of criticism. His life and labours were denounced in the once celebrated *Book of the Georges*. He was more than a lover of Aristotle, said his enemies: he was the enemy of the divine Plato, an apostate among the Greeks, who had even dared to oppose their patron Bessarion. The Cardinal Bessarion was complimented as 'the most Latin of the Greeks'; he might have ruled as Pope in Rome, some said, if it had not been for



Perotti refusing to disturb him in the library. But George of Trebisonde was vilified after Poggio's fashion, and called 'brute' and 'heretic,' and 'more Turkish than the filthiest Turk,' with a hailstorm of still harder epithets. Yet he was certainly a very accurate scholar; and he showed a proper manly spirit when he boxed Poggio's ears in the Theatre of Pompey for reminding him of the cleverness expected from 'a starving Greek.' His life, one is glad to think, had a very peaceful end. The old man had a house at Rome in the Piazza Minerva: his tombstone, much defaced, is before the curtain as one enters the Church of S<sup>ta</sup>. Maria. His son Andrea used to help him in his work, and launched a pamphlet now and again at Theodore of Gaza. The brilliant scholar fell into a second childhood, and might be seen muttering to himself as he rambled with cloak and long staff through the streets of Rome. The grand-daughter who took charge of him married Madalena, a fashionable poet; and Pope Leo X. delighted in hearing their anecdotes about old times, when George and Theodore fought their paper-wars, and wielded their pens in the battle of the books.

Before leaving the subject of the libraries in the two great capitals, we ought to bestow a word or two upon those splendidly endowed institutions by which a few Florentine book-collectors have kept up the literary fame of their city, without pretending to emulate the splendour of the Medici, or the wealth



of the Vatican, or the curious antiquities of St. Mark. We desire especially to say something in remembrance of the 'Riccardiana' which, from its foundation in the sixteenth century, has been famous for the value of its historical manuscripts. Among these are the journals of Frà Oderigo, an early traveller in the East, a treatise in Galileo's own writing, and a defence of Savonarola's policy in the handwriting of Pico of Mirandula. We may see a copy of Marshal Strozzi's will, discussing his plans of suicide, a history of the city composed and written out by Machiavelli, and a large and interesting series of Poggio's literary correspondence. The most celebrated of the librarians was Giovanni Lami, who in the last century kept up with such spirit a somewhat dangerous controversy with the Jesuits; but his monument at Santa Croce may have been owed less to his triumphs in argument than to his passionate devotion to books. His life was spent among them, and he died with a manuscript in his arms; and his memory is still preserved in Florence by the Greek collection with which he endowed the University.

The Abbé Marucelli left his name to another Florentine library. He was a philanthropist as well as a bibliophile; and he gave the huge assemblage of books which he had gathered at Rome to the use of the students in the home of his boyhood. He wrote much, but was almost too modest to publish or preserve his works. Perhaps the most interesting portion of his gift consisted of a series of about a

hundred large folios in which, like the Patriarch Photius, he had written in the form of notes the results of the reading of a life-time.

The Magliabecchian Library maintains the remembrance of a portent in literature. Antonio Magliabecchi, the jeweller's shop-boy, became renowned throughout the world for his abnormal knowledge of books. He never at any time left Florence; but he read every catalogue that was issued, and was in correspondence with all the collectors and librarians of Europe. He was blessed with a prodigious memory, and knew all the contents of a book by 'hunting it with his finger,' or once turning over the pages. He was believed, moreover, to know the habitat of all the rare books in the world; and according to the well-known anecdote he replied to the Grand Duke, who asked for a particular volume: 'The only copy of this work is at Constantinople, in the Sultan's library, the seventh volume in the second book-case, on the right as you go in.' He has been despised as 'a man who lived on titles and indexes, and whose very pillow was a folio.' Dibdin declared that Magliabecchi's existence was confined to 'the parade and pacing of a library'; but, as a matter of fact, the old bibliomaniac lived in a kind of cave made of piles and masses of books, with hardly any room for his cooking or for the wooden cradle lined with pamphlets which he slung between his shelves for a bed. He died in 1714, in his eighty-second year, dirty, ragged, and as happy as a king; and



ANTONIO MAGLIABECCHI.



certainly not less than eight thick volumes of sonnets and epigrams appeared at once in his praise. He left about 30,000 volumes of his own collecting, which he gave to the city upon condition that they should be always free to the public. The library that bears his name contains more than ten times that number. It includes about 60,000 printed books and 2000 MSS. that once belonged to the Grand Dukes, and were kept in their Palatine Galleries. There have been many later additions ; but the whole mass is now dedicated to the worthiest of its former possessors, and remains as a perpetual monument of the most learned and most eccentric of bookmen.

## CHAPTER VII.

### ITALIAN CITIES—OLYMPIA MORATA—URBINO— THE BOOKS OF CORVINUS.

THE memory of many great book-collectors has been preserved in the libraries established from ancient times in several of the Italian cities. There are two at Padua, of which the University Library may claim to have had the longer existence: but the 'Capitolina' can claim Petrarch as one of its founders, and may boast of the books on antiquities gathered by Pignoria, the learned commentator upon the remains of Rome and the historian of his native city of Padua. It may be worth noticing that there were several smaller collections in the churches, due to the industry of bookmen whose names have been forgotten. We hear of the books of St. Anthony and of Santa Giustina: and as to the library in the Church of St. John the tradition long prevailed that Sixtus of Sienna, a noted hunter after rare books, saw on its shelves a copy of the *Epistle to the Laodiceans*, and read it, and made copious extracts.

Mantua received many of the spoils of Rome from Ludovico Gonzaga, which were lost in the later wars: the most famous acquisition was Bembo's tablet of hieroglyphics, which was interpreted by the patient

skill of Lorenzo Pignoria. At Turin the King's Library contains some of the papers and drawings of Ligorio, who helped in the building of St. Peter's: but most of his books were taken to Ferrara, where he held an official appointment as antiquary. The University Library contains the collections of the Dukes of Savoy, including a quantity of Oriental MSS., and some of the precious volumes illuminated by the monks of Bobbio. The Père Jacob in his treatise upon famous libraries had some personal anecdote to record about the bookmen of each place that he visited. At Naples he saw the collection of the works of Pontanus, presented to the Dominicans by his daughter Eugenia; at Bologna he found a long roll of the Pentateuch, 'written by Esdras'; and at Ferrara he described the tomb of Cœlius, who was buried among his books, at his own desire, like a miser in the midst of his riches.

Ferrara derived a special fame from the munificence of the House of Este and the memory of Olympia Morata. A long line of illustrious princes had built up 'an Athens in the midst of Bœotia.' Ariosto sang the praises of the literary Court, and Tasso's misfortunes were due to his eagerness in accepting its pleasures. The library of Lilio Giraldi was a meeting-place for the scholars of Italy, and it continued to be the pride of Ferrara when it passed to Cinthio Giraldi the poet. Renée of France, after the death of her husband, Duke Hercules, made Ferrara a city of refuge for Calvin and Marot and



the fugitive Reformers from Germany. Olympia Morata, the daughter of a Protestant citizen, was chosen as the companion and instructress of the Princess Anna. They passed a quiet life among their books until a time of persecution arrived, when Olympia found a hope of safety in marrying Andrew Grundler of Schweinfurt. Her love for books appears in the letters written towards the close of her life. In 1554 she tells Curio of the storming of Schweinfurt, where she lost her library: 'when I entered Heidelberg barefoot, with my hair down, and in a ragged borrowed gown, I looked like the Queen of the Beggars.' 'I hope,' she said, 'that with the other books you will send me the Commentary on Jeremiah.' Her friend answers that Homer and Sophocles are on their way: 'and you shall have Jeremiah too, that you may lament with him the misfortunes of your husband's country.' Olympia replied from her death-bed, returning her warmest thanks for the books. 'Farewell, excellent Curio, and do not distress yourself when you hear of my death. I send you such of my poems as I have been able to write out since the storming of Schweinfurt; all my other writings have perished; I hope that you will be my Aristarchus and will polish the poems; and now again, Farewell.'

The Ducal Library of Ferrara was transferred to Modena when the Duchy was added to the States of the Church. The collection at Modena is still famous for its illuminated MSS., and for the care bestowed by



Muratori and Tiraboschi in their selection of printed books. The Court of Naples also might boast of some illustrious bibliophiles. Queen Joanna possessed one of those small *Livres d'Heures* of 'microscopic refinement' which Mr. Middleton has classed among the 'greatest marvels of human skill.' René of Anjou, her unfortunate successor, found a solace for exile in his books, and showed in a Burgundian prison that he could paint a vellum as cleverly as a monkish scribe. Alfonso, the next King of Naples, was a collector in the strictest sense of the term. He would go off to Florence for bargains, and would even undertake a commission for a book-loving subject. Antonio Becatelli corresponded on these matters with his royal master. 'I have the message from Florence that you know of a fine Livy at the price of 125 crowns: I pray your Majesty to buy it for me and to send it here, and I will get the money together in the meantime. But I should like your Majesty's opinion on the point, whether Poggio or myself has chosen the better part. He has sold Livy, the king of books, written out by his own hand, to buy an estate near Florence; but I, to get my Livy, have put up all my property for sale by auction.' The books collected by Alfonso were at the end of the century carried off by Charles VIII., and were divided between the Royal Library at Fontainebleau and the separate collection of Anne of Brittany.

A romantic interest has always attached to the

library at Urbino. The best scholars in Europe used to assemble at the palace, where Duke Federigo made such a gathering of books 'as had not been seen for a thousand years,' in the hall where Emilia and the pale Duke Guidubaldo led the pleasant debates described in the 'Cortegiano.' Federigo, the most successful general in the Italian wars, had built a palace of delight in his rude Urbino, in which he hoped to set a copy of every book in the world. His book-room was adorned with ideal portraits by Piero della Francesca and Melozzo: it was very large and lofty, 'with windows set high against the Northern sky.' The catalogue of the books is still preserved in the Vatican. It shows the names of all the classics, the Fathers, and the mediæval schoolmen, many works upon Art, and almost all the Greek and Hebrew works that were known to exist. Among the more modern writers we find those whose works we have discussed, Petrarch and his friends, Guarini and Perotti, and Valla with his enemy Poggio; among the others we notice Alexander ab Alexandro, a most learned antiquarian from Naples, of whom Erasmus once said: 'He seems to have known everybody, but nobody knows who he is.' The chief treasure of the place was a Bible, illuminated in 1478 by a Florentine artist, which the Duke caused to be bound 'in gold brocade most richly adorned with silver.' 'Shortly before he went to the siege of Ferrara,' says his librarian, 'I compared his catalogue with those that he had procured from other places,

such as the lists from the Vatican, Florence, Venice, and Pavia, down to the University of Oxford in England, and I found that all except his own were deficient or contained duplicate volumes.' His son, Duke Guidubaldo, was a celebrated Greek scholar; and the eulogies of Bembo and Castiglione on his Duchess, Elizabeth Gonzaga, attest the literary distinction of her Court. Francesco, the third Duke, lost his dominions to Leo X.; but he showed his good taste in stipulating that the books were to be reserved as his personal effects. Some of the early-printed books are still in the palace at Urbino; others are at Castel Durante, or in the College of the Sapienza at Rome; and the splendid MSS. form one of the principal attractions of the Vatican.

Among private collectors the name of Cardinal Domenico Capranica should be commemorated. Though continually engaged in war and diplomacy, he found time to surround himself with books. On his death in 1458 he gave his palace and library towards the endowment of a new College at Rome, and his plans were carried out with some alterations by his brother Angelo Capranica. Two Greeks of the imperial House of Lascaris took important places in the history of the Italian renaissance. Constantine had found a refuge at Milan after the conquest of his country, and here he became tutor to the Lady Hippolyta Sforza, and published a grammar which was the first book printed in Greek. He afterwards lectured at Messina, where he formed a large collec-

tion of MSS., which he bequeathed to the citizens. In a later age it was taken to Spain by Philip II. and placed on the shelves of the Escorial. John Lascaris belonged to a younger generation. He was protected by Leo X., and may be regarded as the true founder of the Greek College at Rome. In matters of literature he was the ambassador of Lorenzo de' Medici, and was twice sent to the Turkish Court in search of books. After the expulsion of the Medici, John Lascaris went to reside in Paris, where he gave lectures on poetry, and employed himself in securing Greek lecturers for a new College ; and he was also engaged to help Budæus, who had been his pupil, in arranging the books at Fontainebleau.

Matthias Corvinus, King of Hungary, had the largest library in Europe. It was credited with containing the impossible number of 50,000 volumes ; its destruction during the Turkish wars is allowed to have been one of the chief misfortunes of literature. Matthias began his long reign of forty-two years in 1458, and during all that time he was adding to his collections at Buda. Some have derided Corvinus as a mere gormandiser with an appetite for all kinds of books. Some have blamed him for risking such inestimable treasures upon a dangerous frontier. It is admitted that he worked hard to dispel the thick darkness that surrounded the Hungarian people. He kept thirty scribes continually employed at Buda, besides four permitted to work at Florence by the

courtesy of Lorenzo de' Medici. The whole library may be regarded as in some sense a Florentine colony. Fontius, the king's chief agent in the Levant, had been a well-known author in Florence: his Commentary upon Persius, once presented to Corvinus himself, is now in the library at Wolfenbüttel. Attavante, the pupil of Frà Angelico, was employed to illuminate the MSS. A good specimen of his work is the Breviary of St. Jerome at Paris, which came out of the palace at Buda and was acquired by the nation from the Duc de la Vallière. A traveller named Brassicanus visited Hungary in the reign of King Louis. He was enraptured with the grand palace by the river, the tall library buildings and their stately porticoes. He passes the galleries under review, and tells us of the huge gold and silver globes, the instruments of science on the walls, and an innumerable crowd of well-favoured and well-clad books. He felt, he assures us, as if he were in 'Jupiter's bosom,' looking down upon that 'heavenly scene.' He wished that he had brought away some picture or minute record; but we have his account of the books which he handled, the Greek orations that are now lost for ever, the history of Salvian saved by the King's good nature in presenting the book to his admiring visitor. The palace and library were destroyed when Buda was taken by the Turks. The Pasha in command refused an enormous sum subscribed for the rescue of the books. The janissaries tore off the metal coverings from the rarer

MSS., and tossed the others aside; the only known copy of Heliodorus, from which all our editions of the tale of Chariclea are derived, was found in an open gutter. Some books were burned and others hacked and maimed, or trodden under foot; many were carried away into the neighbouring villages. About four hundred were piled up in a deserted tower, and were protected against all intrusion by the seal of the Grand Vizier. There were adventures still in store for the captives. Through the scattered villages Dr. Sambucus went up and down, recovering the strayed Corvinian books for the Emperor Rodolph, a strange Quixotic figure always riding alone, with swinging saddle-bags, and a great mastiff running on either side. Many a disappointed wayfarer was turned away from the lonely tower. At last Busbec the great traveller, because he was an ambassador from the Emperor, was allowed to enter a kind of charnel-house, and to see what had been the lovely gaily-painted vellums lying squalidly piled in heaps. To see them was a high favour; the visitor was not permitted to touch the remains; and it was not until 1686 that about forty of the maltreated volumes were rescued by force of arms and set in a place of safety among the Emperor's books at Vienna.

It has always been a favourite exercise to track the Corvinian MSS. into their scattered hiding-places. Some are in the Vatican, others at Ferrara, and some in their birth-place at Florence. It is said that some

of them have never left their home in Hungary. Venice possesses a 'History of the House of Corvinus,' and Jena has a work by Guarini with the King's insignia 'most delicately painted on the title.' The portraits of the King and Queen are on one of the examples secured by Augustus of Brunswick for his library at Wolfenbüttel. Mary of Austria, the widow of King Louis, presented two of the Corvinian books to the *Librairie de Bourgogne* at Brussels; one was the Missal, full of Attavante's work, on which the Sovereigns of Brabant were sworn; the other was the 'Golden Gospels,' long the pride of the Escorial, but now restored to Belgium.

Other scattered volumes from the library of Corvinus have been traced to various cities in France and Germany. There has been much controversy on the question whether any of them are to be found in England. Some think that examples might be traced among the Arundel MSS. in the British Museum. Thomas, Earl of Arundel, it is known, went on a book-hunting expedition to Heidelberg, where he bought some of the remnants of the Palatine collection. Passing on to Nuremberg he obtained about a hundred MSS. that had belonged to Pirckheimer, the first great German bibliophile; and these, according to some authorities, came out of the treasure-house at Buda. The Duke of Norfolk was persuaded by John Evelyn to place them in the Gresham Library, under the care of the Royal Society, and they afterwards became the property of the nation.



Oldys the antiquary distinctly stated that these 'were the remnants of the King of Hungary'; 'they afterwards fell into the hands of Bilibald Pirckheimer.' The Senator of Nuremberg made the books his own in a very emphatic way: 'there is to be seen his head graved by Albert Dürer, one of the first examples of sticking or pasting of heads, arms, or cyphers into volumes.' Pirckheimer died in 1530, three years after the sack of Buda, and had the opportunity of getting some of the books. We cannot tell to what extent he succeeded, or whether William Oldys was right on the facts before him; but we know from Pirckheimer's own letters that he was the actual owner of at least some MSS. that 'came to him out of the spoils of Hungary.'



## CHAPTER VIII.

### GERMANY—FLANDERS—BURGUNDY—ENGLAND.

ALMOST immediately after the invention of printing in Germany there arose a vast public demand for all useful kinds of knowledge. The study of Greek was essential to those who would compete with the Italians in any of the higher departments of science, and great schools were established for the purpose by Dringeberg in a town of Alsace, and by Rudolf Lange at Münster. The Alsatian Academy had the credit of educating Rhenanus and Bilibald Pirckheimer. Lange filled his shelves with a quantity of excellent classics that he had purchased during a tour in Italy. Hermann Busch, the great critic, was taught in this school, and he used to say in after life that he often dreamed of Lange's house, and saw an altar of the Muses surrounded by the shadowy figures of ancient poets and orators. Busch was sent afterwards to Deventer, where he was the class-mate of Erasmus. Here one day, while the boys were at their themes, came Rudolf Agricola, the sturdy doctor from Friesland, who wanted to see a Germany 'more Latin than Latium,' and had vowed to abate the 'Italian insolence.' The visitor told Erasmus that he was sure to be a great man, and patted the young Hermann on the head,

saying that he had the look of a poet ; and he is, indeed, still faintly remembered for the lines in which he celebrated the triumph of Reuchlin.

Reuchlin had learned Greek at Paris and Poitiers ; at Florence he studied the secrets of the Cabala with Mirandula ; and he perfected his Hebrew at Rome, where he acted as an envoy from the Elector Palatine. Reuchlin for many years led a peaceful life at Tübingen, an oasis of freedom, in which he could print or read what he pleased. But in 1509 he was forced into a quarrel, which involved the whole question of the liberty of the press, and incidentally associated the cause of the Reformation with the maintenance of classical learning.

In the year 1509 one Pfefferkorn, a monk who had been a convert from Judaism, obtained an imperial decree that all Hebrew books, except the Scriptures, should be destroyed. Reuchlin sprang forth to defend his beloved Cabala, and maintained that only those volumes ought to be burned which were proved to have a taint of magic or blasphemy. He was cited to answer for his heresy before the Grand Inquisitor at Cologne ; and the world, at first indifferent, soon saw that the cause of the New Learning was at stake. In the summer of 1514 there was a notable gathering of Reformers at Frankfort Fair. We have nothing in our own days that quite resembles these mediæval marts ; the annual concourse of merchants might perhaps be compared to one of our industrial exhibitions, or to some conjunction of all the trade of Leipsic and

Nijni Novgorod. The Italians affected to believe that the Fair by the Main was chiefly taken up with the sale of mechanical contrivances; the Germans knew that their 'Attic mart' held streets of bookshops and publishers' offices. Henri Estienne saw Professors here from Oxford and Cambridge, from Louvain, and from Padua: there was a crowd of poets, historians, and men of science; and he declared that another Alexandrian Library might be bought in those seething stalls, if one laid out money like a king, or like a maniac, as others might say. In this German Athens a meeting was arranged between Reuchlin and Erasmus; they were joined at Frankfort by Hermann Busch, who brought with him the manuscript of his 'Triumph'; and perhaps it was not difficult to predict that the cause of the old books would be safe in the hands of Pope Leo x. They found themselves in company with that ferocious satirist, Ulric von Hutten, memorable for his threat to the citizens of Mainz, when they proposed to destroy his library, and he answered, 'If you burn my books, I will burn your town.' The Grand Inquisitor was utterly overwhelmed by his volume of Pasquinades, a work so witty that it was constantly attributed to Erasmus, and so carefully destroyed that Heinsius gave a hundred gold pieces for the copy which Count Hohendorf afterwards placed among the imperial rarities at Vienna. The satirist's volume of *Letters from Obscure Men* completed the rout of the Inquisition; and we are told by the way that it

saved the life of Erasmus by throwing him into a violent fit of laughter.

We do not suppose that many Germans of that day loved books for their delicate appearance, or the damask and satin of their 'pleasant coverture.' Reuchlin may be counted among the bibliophiles, since he refused a large sum from the Emperor in lieu of a Hebrew Bible. Melanchthon's books were rough volumes in stamped pigskin, made valuable by his marginal notes. The library of Erasmus may be shown to have been somewhat insignificant by these words in his will : ' Some time ago I sold my library to John à Lasco of Poland, and according to the contract between us it is to be delivered to him on his paying two hundred florins to my heir ; if he refuses to accede to this condition, or die before me, my heir is to dispose of the books as he shall think proper.' The principal bibliophiles in Germany were the wealthy Fuggers of Augsburg, of whom Charles v. used to say when he saw any display of magnificence, ' I have a burgess at Augsburg who can do better than that.' These merchants were commonly believed to have discovered the philosopher's stone : they were in fact enriched by their trade with the East, and had found another fortune in the quicksilver of Almaden, by which the gold was extracted from the ores of Peru. Raimond Fugger amassed a noble library before the end of the fifteenth century. Ulric his successor was the friend of Henri Estienne, who proudly announced himself as printer to the Fuggers on many a title-

page. Ulric spent so much money on books that his family at one time obtained a decree to restrain his extravagance. His library was said to contain as many books as there were stars in heaven. The original stock received a vast accession under his brother's will, and he purchased another huge collection formed by Dr. Achilles Gasparus. On his death he left the whole accumulated mass to the Elector Palatine, and the books thenceforth shared the fortunes of the Heidelberg Library. When Tilly took the city in 1622 the best part of the collection was offered to the Vatican, and Leo Allatius the librarian was sent to make the selection, and to superintend their transport to Rome. The Emperor Napoleon thought fit to remove some of the MSS. to Paris; but, on their being seized by the Allies in 1815, it was thought that prescription should not be pleaded by Rome: 'especially,' says Hallam, 'when she was recovering what she had lost by the same right of spoliation'; and the whole collection of which the Elector had been deprived was restored to the library at Heidelberg.

Flanders had been the home of book-learning in very early times. The Counts of Hainault and the Dukes of Brabant were patrons of literature when most of the princes of Europe were absorbed in the occupations of the chase. The Flemish monasteries preserved the literary tradition. At Alne, near Liège, the monks had a Bible which Archdeacon Philip, the friend of St. Bernard, had transcribed before the year

1140. We hear of another at Louvain, about a century later in date, with initials in blue and gold throughout, which had taken three years in copying. Deventer was known as 'the home of Minerva' before the days of St. Thomas à Kempis. The Forest of Soigny provided a retreat for learning in its houses of Val-Rouge and Val-Vert and the Sept-Fontaines. The Brothers of the Common Life had long been engaged in the production of books before they gave themselves to the labours of the printing-press at Brussels. Thomas à Kempis himself has described their way of living at Deventer. 'Much was I delighted,' he said, 'with the devout conversation, the irreproachable demeanour and humility of the brethren: I had never seen such piety and charity: they took no concern about what passed outside, but remained at home, employed in prayer and study, or in copying useful books.' This work at good books, he repeated, is the opening of the fountains of life: 'Blessed are the hands of the copyists: for which of the world's writings would be remembered, if there had been no pious hand to transcribe them?' He himself during his stay at Deventer copied out a Bible, a Missal, and four of St. Bernard's works, and when he went to Zwolle he composed and wrote out a chronicle of the brotherhood.

The Abbey of St. Bavon at Ghent was endowed with a great number of books by Rafael de Mercatellis, the reputed son of Philippe le Bon, Duke of Burgundy. As Abbot he devoted his life to increasing the

splendour of his monastery. The illuminated MSS. survived the perils of war and the excesses of the Revolution, and are still to be seen in the University with the Abbot's signature on their glittering title-pages.

A more important collection belonged to Louis de Bruges, Seigneur de La Gruthuyse. As titular Earl of Winchester he was in some degree connected with this country. When Edward IV. fled from England, and was chased by German pirates, this nobleman was Governor of Holland. He rescued the fugitives, and paid their expenses; and when Edward recovered his throne he rewarded his friend with a title and a charge on the Customs. The dignity carried no active privileges, and in 1499 it was surrendered to the King at Calais. The books of La Gruthuyse have been described as 'the bibliographical marvel of the age.' They were celebrated for their choice vellum, their delicate penmanship, and their exquisite illustrations. Louis de Bruges was the friend and patron of Colard Mansion, who printed in partnership with Caxton. Three copies are known of his work called the 'Penitence of Adam.' One belonged to the Royal Library of France: another was borrowed from a monastery by the Duc d'Isenghien, an enthusiastic but somewhat unscrupulous collector, and this copy was sold at the Gaignat sale in 1769; the third was the property of M. Lambinet of Brussels, and is remarkable for the miniature in which Mansion is represented as offering the book



to his patron in the garden of La Gruthuyse. After the death of Louis his books passed to his son Jean de Bruges; but most of them were soon afterwards acquired by Louis XII., who added them to the library at Blois, the insignia of La Gruthuyse being replaced by the arms of France. Others were bequeathed to Louis XIV. by the bibliophile Hippolyte de Béthune, who refused a magnificent offer from Queen Christina of Sweden in order that his books might remain in France. A fine copy of the *Forteresse du Foy* belonged to Claude d'Urfé, whose library of 4000 books, 'all in green velvet,' was kept in his castle at La Bastie; when all the others were dispersed the Gruthuyse volume remained as an heirloom, and descended to Honoré d'Urfé, the dreariest of all writers of romance. In 1776 it belonged to the Duc de la Vallière, and was purchased for the French Government at one of his numerous sales. Some of the Flemish books remained in their original home. A volume of Wallon songs was discovered at Ghent in the last generation; and two other Gruthuyse books in the same language, from the great collection of M. Van Hulthem, are now deposited in the Burgundian Library at Brussels.

The Dukes of Burgundy were of the book-loving race of the Valois. The brothers, Charles le Sage, Jean Duc de Berry, and Philippe le Hardi of Burgundy, were all founders of celebrated libraries. Philippe increased his store of books by his marriage with the heiress of Flanders; he kept a large staff of scribes



at work, and made incessant purchases from the Lombard booksellers in Paris. Duke John, his successor, is remembered for his acquisition of a wonderful *Valerius Maximus* from the librarian of the Sorbonne. But the collections of which the remnants are now preserved in Belgium were almost entirely the work of Duke Philippe le Bon. He kept his books in many different places. He had a library at Dijon, and another in Paris, a few volumes in the treasury at Ghent, a thousand volumes at Bruges, and nearly as many at Antwerp. It has been calculated that he possessed more than 3200 MSS. in all; and, if that figure is correct, the House of Bourgogne-Valois was in this respect almost the richest of the reigning families of Europe.

Under Charles the Bold the libraries appear to have been left alone, except as regards a few characteristic additions. The Duchess Margaret was the patroness of her countryman Caxton, whose *Recuyell*, probably published at Bruges in 1474 during his partnership with Colard Mansion, was the first printed English book. The taste of the Duchess may answer for the appearance in the library of the *Moral Discourses*, and the elegant *Debates upon Happiness*. The *Cyrobædia* and the romance of *Quintus Curtius* must be attributed to the warlike Duke. At Berne they have a relic of the fight where his men were shot down 'like ducks in the reeds.' It is a manuscript, with a note added to the following effect: 'These military ordinances of the excellent and invincible

Duke Charles of Burgundy were taken at Morat on the 14th of June 1476, being found in the pavilion of that excellent and potent prince.' When Charles was killed at Nancy in the following year his favourite *Cyropædia* was found by the Swiss in his baggage. This volume was bought in 1833 by the Queen of the Belgians at a book-sale in Paris, and has now been restored to its original home at Brussels.

After the death of Charles the Bold his library at Dijon was given by the French King to George de la Tremouille, the governor of the province. It passed to the family of Guy de Rocheford, and in the course of time many of the best works have found their way into the national collection. Mary of Burgundy retained the other libraries at Brussels. After her marriage with Maximilian her family treasures were for the most part dispersed in France, Germany, and Sweden, the needy prince being unable to resist the temptation of pilfering and pawning the books; but the generosity of Margaret of Austria, a great collector herself of fine copies and first editions, in some measure repaired the loss; and Mary of Austria, who became Regent in 1530, continued the work of restoration.

The magnificence of the Burgundian Court and the commercial prosperity of the Low Countries led to a continuous demand for fine books among the other productions of luxury. We learn also by the Venetian Archives that throughout the fifteenth century books were being imported into England by the galleys

that brought the produce of the East to our merchants in London and Southampton. There ~~were~~ as yet but slight signs of literary activity; but it has been well said that 'the seed was germinating in the ground'; and many foreign works were brought home from time to time by those who had studied or travelled in Italy. It was the fashion of the day to learn under Guarini at Ferrara; the list of his scholars includes the names of Robert Fleming, and Bishop William Gray, and the book-loving John Tiptoft, Earl of Worcester, whose virtue and learning became the object of William Caxton's celebrated eulogy. We may commemorate here the earlier labours of Lord Cobham, who caused Wicliffe's works to be copied at a great expense and to be conveyed for safety to Bohemia, and of Sir Walter Sherington, who early in the same century built a library at Glastonbury, and furnished it with 'fair books upon vellum.' Towards the end of the century learning began to flourish under the patronage of Lord Saye, and the accomplished Anthony Lord Rivers: and its future in this country was secure, when the English scholars began to flock towards Florence to hear the lectures of Chalcondylas and his successor Politian. Grocyn, our first Greek Professor, had drawn his learning from that source, and Linacre had sat there in a class with the children of Lorenzo de' Medici. Cardinal Pole and the Ciceronian De Longueil shared as students in those tasks and sports at Padua which were so vividly described by the English churchman

in his record of their life-long friendship. Thomas Lilly, the master at St. Paul's, not only worked at Florence but went to perfect his Greek in the Isle of Rhodes. Sir Thomas More was the pupil of Grocyn, whom he seems to have excelled in scholarship. His affection for books is known by his son-in-law's careful biography. An anecdote cited by Dibdin preserves a record of the fate of his library. When the Chancellor was arrested, the officers were expected to listen to his talk with certain spies, on the chance that the prisoner might be led into a treasonable conversation ; but, as Mr. Palmer said in his deposition, 'he was so busy trussing up Sir Thomas More's books in a sack that he took no heed to their talk'; and Sir Richard Southwell on the same occasion deposed, that 'being appointed only to look to the conveyance of the books, he gave no ear unto them.' Erasmus praised More as 'the most gentle soul ever framed by Nature.' He was astonished at his learning, and indeed at the high standard that had already been attained in England. 'It is incredible,' he said, 'what a thick crop of old books spreads out on every side : there is so much erudition, not of any ordinary kind, but recondite and accurate and antique, both in Greek and Latin, that you need not go to Italy except for the pleasure of travelling.' Hallam remarked that Erasmus was always ready with a compliment ; but he admitted that before the year 1520 there were probably more scholars in England than in France, 'though all together they might not weigh as heavy as Budæus.'

## CHAPTER IX.

### FRANCE : EARLY BOOKMEN—ROYAL COLLECTORS.

WE shall take Budæus as our first example of the French bookmen in the period that followed the invention of printing. Of Guillaume Budé, to give him his original name, it was said that he knew Greek as minutely as the orators of the age of Demosthenes. If there was any real foundation for the compliment it must have consisted in the fact that the Frenchman had more acquaintance with the language than his instructor George of Sparta. Budæus is said to have paid a very large sum for a course of lectures on Homer, and to have been not a pennyworth 'the wiser at the end. Erasmus, who also learned of the Spartan, confessed that his tutor only 'stammered in Greek,' and that he seemed to have neither the desire nor the capacity for teaching. It is interesting to see how these students made the best of their bad materials. 'I have given my whole soul to Greek,' wrote Erasmus, 'and as soon as I get any money I shall buy books first, and then some clothes.' Budæus was known as 'the prodigy of France,' and even Scaliger allowed that his country would never see such a scholar again; and it is rather surprising that

Erasmus should have compared his style unfavourably with that of Badius, the printer from Brabant.

Budæus was the first to apply the historical method to the explanation of the Civil Law: with the assistance of Jean Grolier he brought out a very learned treatise on ancient weights and measures; and in publishing his commentaries on the Greek language he was said to have raised himself to 'a pinnacle of philological glory.' One of the stories about his devotion to books may have been told of others, but is certainly characteristic of the man. A servant rushes in to say that the house is on fire; but the scholar answers, 'Tell my wife: you know that I never interfere with the household.' He was married twice over, he used to say, to the Muse of philology as well as to a mortal wife; but he confessed that he would never have got far with the first, if the second had not commanded in the library, always ready to look out passages and to hand down the necessary books.

When Charles VIII. seized the royal library at Naples, a few of the best MSS. escaped his scrutiny, and these were sold by the dispossessed King to the Cardinal D'Amboise. A new school of illuminators at Rouen provided the Cardinal with a number of other splendid volumes. He lived till the year 1510, and was able to collect a second library of printed books. He divided the whole into two portions at his death, the French books passing to a relation and afterwards to the family of La Rochefoucauld, and

the rest forming the foundation of a fine library long possessed by the Archbishops of Rouen.

The Archbishop Juvenal des Ursins died in the middle of the fifteenth century. He is celebrated as a lover of good books, though only a single example of his choice survived into the present generation. It was a magnificent missal on vellum, filled with the choicest miniatures, and known as the best specimen of its class in the possession of Prince Soltikoff. It is only a few years ago that it entered the collection of M. Firmin-Didot, who paid 36,000 francs for it at the Prince's sale: in the year 1861 he gave it up to the City of Paris; but like so many of the great books of France it perished in the fires of the Commune.

Jacques de Pars, the physician to Charles VII., bequeathed his scientific MSS. to the College of Medicine at Paris: and the value of his gift was manifested when the powerful Louis XI. was forbidden to take out a medical treatise for transcription unless he would pledge his silver plate and find collateral security for its safe return. Etienne Chevalier was one of the few servants of King Charles who were tolerated by King Louis. He became Chief Treasurer to Louis XI., and built a great mansion in the Rue de la Verrerie in Paris. The walls and ceilings were decorated with allegorical designs in honour of his friend Agnès Sorel, whose courage had led to the expulsion of the English invaders. The library was filled with choice MSS., illuminated for the most part by Jehan Foucquet, the



famous miniaturist from Tours. Nicholas Chevalier, his descendant in the sixteenth century, was also illustrious as a bibliophile, and amidst his own printed folios and pedigrees rolled in blue velvet could still show the marvellous *Livre d'Heures*, of which all that now remains is a set of paintings hacked out from the text. M. Le Roux de Lincy has compiled a long and interesting list of the French bibliophiles who preceded the age of Grolier. We can only mention a few out of the number. Of the poets we have Charles, Duke of Orleans, the owner of eighty magnificent volumes preserved in the Castle of Blois, and Pierre Ronsard; and we may add the Abbé Philippe Desportes, renowned not less for a rivalry with Ronsard than for his sumptuous mode of living and the fortune expended on his library. To the statesmen may be added Florimond Robertet, the first of a long line of bibliophiles. Among the learned ladies of the sixteenth century we may choose Louise Labé, surnamed 'La Belle Cordière,' who made a collection of a new kind, composed entirely of works in French, Spanish, and Italian, and Charlotte Guillard, a printer as well as a book-collector, who published at her own expense a volume of the Commentaries of St. Jerome.

The most important of the private collectors in this period was Arthur Gouffier, Seigneur de Boissy, another of the faithful followers of Charles VII. who were so fortunate as to gain the confidence of his jealous successor.

He was a lover of fine bindings in the style ren-



dered famous by Grolier. One of his books belonged to the late Baron Jérôme Pichon, the head of the French *Société des Bibliophiles*, and it is admitted that nothing even in Grolier's library could excel it in delicacy of execution. His son, Claude Gouffier, created Duc de Rouannais, was a collector of an essentially modern type. He bought autographs and historical portraits, as well as rare MSS. and good specimens of printing, and was careful to have his books well clothed in the fashionable painted binding. Claude Gouffier was tutor to the young Duc d'Angoulême, who came to the throne as Francis I.; and to him may be due his royal pupil's affection for the books bedecked with the salamander in flames and the silver *fleurs-de-lys*.

Francis I. cared little for printed books in comparison with manuscript rarities; he added very few to the collection at Fontainebleau beyond what he received as presents from his mother, Queen Louise, and his sister Marguerite d'Angoulême. The royal library owed many of its finest manuscripts to the delicate taste of the princess who was compared to the 'blossom of poetry' and praised as the 'Marguerite des Marguerites.' Its wealth was much increased by the confiscation of the property of the Constable de Bourbon; and it should be remembered that among the additions from this source were most of the magnificently illuminated manuscripts that had belonged to Jean Duc de Berri.

The King was much attracted by the hope of

making literary discoveries in the East ; he obtained much information on the subject from John Lascaris, and despatched Pierre Gilles to make purchases in the Levantine monasteries. A similar commission was entrusted to Guillaume Postel, one of the greatest linguists that ever lived, but so crazy that he believed himself to be Adam born to live again, and so unfortunate that he could seldom keep out of a prison.

The reign of Henri Deux is of great importance in the annals of bibliography. An ordinance was made in 1558, through the influence, as it is supposed, of Diane de Poitiers, by which every publisher was compelled to present copies of his books, printed on vellum and suitably bound, to the libraries at Blois and Fontainebleau, and such others as the King should appoint. About eight hundred volumes in the national collection represent the immediate results of this copy-tax ; they are all marked with the ambiguous cypher, which might either represent the initials of the King and Queen or might indicate the names of Henri and Diane. Queen Catherine de Medici was an enthusiastic collector. When she arrived in France as a girl she brought with her from Urbino a number of MSS. that had belonged to the Eastern Emperors, and had been purchased by Cosmo de' Medici. She afterwards seized the whole library of Marshal Strozzi on the ground that they must be regarded as 'Medici books,' having been inherited at one time by a nephew of Leo X. On her death in 1589 she was found to have been

possessed of about eight hundred Greek manuscripts, all of the highest rarity and value. There was some danger that they would be seized by her creditors; but the King was advised that such an assemblage could not be got together again in any country or at any cost. The library was made an heir-loom of the Crown: and at De Thou's suggestion the books were stripped of their rich coverings and disguised in an official costume.

Diane de Poitiers, a true *chasseresse des bouquins*, was herself the daughter of a bibliophile. The Comte de St. Vallier loved books in Italian bindings, and there is a *Roman de Perceforest* in the collection of the Duc d'Aumale, that bears the Saint Vallier arms and marks of ownership, though it was confidently believed to have been bound for Grolier when it belonged to King Louis-Philippe. Henri Deux and the Duchesse Diane kept a treasure of books between them in the magnificent castle of Anet: and after they were dead the books remained unknown and unnoticed in their hall until the death of the Princesse de Condé in the year 1723. The sale which then took place was a revelation of beauty. The books were in good condition, and were all clad in sumptuous bindings. There was a remarkable diversity in their contents, the Fathers and the poets standing side by side with treatises upon medicine and the management of a household, as if they had been acquired in great part by virtue of the tax upon the publishers. Most of them, we are told, were bought by the 'in-

trepid book-hunter' M. Guyon de Sardières, whose whole library in its turn was engulfed in the miscellaneous collections of the Duc de la Vallière. An article in the *Bibliophile Français* contains a curious argument in favour of Diane de Poitiers, as being one of a band of devoted Frenchwomen who saved their country from foreign ideas. We are reminded of the patriotism of Agnès Sorel, and of the excellent influence of Gabrielle d'Estrées. The Duchesse d'Estampes, we are told, preserved Francis I. from the influence of the Italian renaissance, and prevented the subjugation of France 'by a Benvenuto or Da Vinci'; and in the same way, when Catherine de Medici was preparing to introduce other strange fashions, Diane came forward in her 'magical beauty' and saved the originality of her nation.

The three sons of Catherine were all fond of books in their way. Francis II. died before he had time to make any collection; if he had lived, Mary of Scotland, who shared his throne for a few weeks, might have led him into the higher paths of literature. Some of their favourite volumes have been preserved; the young King's books bear the dolphin or the arms of France; the Queen bound everything in black morocco emblazoned with the lion of Scotland. Charles IX. had a turn for literature, as beseemed the pupil of Bishop Amyot; he studied archæology in some detail, and purchased Grolier's cabinet of coins. He brought the library of Fontainebleau to Paris, where his father had made the beginning of a new

collection out of the confiscated property of the Président Ranconnet, and gave the management of the whole to the venerable Amyot. His brother, the effeminate Henri Trois, cared much for bindings and little for books: it is said that he was somewhat of a book-binder himself, as his brother Charles had worked at the armourer's smithy, and as some of his successors were to take up the technicalities of the barber, the cook, and the locksmith. Being an extravagant idler himself, he passed laws against extravagance in his subjects; but though furs and heavy chains might be forbidden, he allowed gilt edges and arabesques on books, and only drew the line at massive gold stamps. His own taste combined the gloomy and the grotesque, his clothes and his bindings alike being covered with skulls and cross-bones, and spangles to represent tears, with other conventional emblems of sorrow.

Louise of Lorraine, after the King's death, retired to the castle of Chenonceau: and the widowed queen employed her time, in that 'palace of fairy-land,' at forming a small cabinet of books. The catalogue describes about eighty volumes, mostly bound by Nicolas Eve; and the gay morocco covers in red, blue, and green, were decorated with brilliant arabesques, or sprinkled with golden lilies. Hardly any perfect specimens remain, even in the National Library. They were all bequeathed by the Queen to her niece the Duchesse de Vendôme; but in the hands of a later possessor they were put up for sale

and dispersed, and have now for the most part disappeared.

Henri Quatre is said to have fled to his books for consolation when abandoned by Gabrielle d'Estrées. Though no bibliophile himself, he was anxious that everything should be done that could promote the interests of literature. He intended to establish a magnificent library in the Collège de Cambray, but died before the plans were completed. The books at Blois, however, were brought to Paris and thrown open to deserving students; the library already transported from Fontainebleau and the MSS. of Catherine de Medici were removed to the Collège de Clermont, and placed under the guardianship of De Thou.

Marguerite de Valois agreed with the King, if in nothing else, at least in a desire for the extension of knowledge. She was a most learned lady as well as a collector of exquisite books. No branch of science, sacred or profane, came amiss to the 'Reine Margot.' She may be regarded as the Queen of the 'Femmes Bibliophiles' who occupied so important a position in the history of the Court of France. In the domain of good taste she excels all competitors; as regards intellect we can hardly estimate the distance between Marguerite and the elegant collectors whom we distinguish according to the names of their book-binders. Anne of Austria is remembered for the lace-like patterns of Le Gascon; and Queen Marie Leczinska is famous for the splendour of her volumes

bound by Padeloup. Even the libraries of the daughters of Louis Quinze, three diligent and well-instructed princesses, are only known apart by the colours of the moroccos employed by Derôme. The dull contents of the Pompadour's shelves would hardly be noticeable without her 'three castles,' or the 'ducal mantle,' by Biziaux ; and no one but Louis Quinze himself would have praised the intelligent choice of Du Barry, or cast a look upon her collection of odd volumes and 'remainders,' if they had not been decorated like the rest of her furniture. In all the lists of these 'ladies of old-time' by M. Guigard, by M. Quentin-Bauchart, or by M. Uzanne, it is difficult to find one who preferred the inside to the outside of the book. M. Uzanne, indeed, has contended that no female bibliophile ever felt the passion that inspired a Grolier or a De Thou : that Marie Antoinette herself may have caged thousands of books at the Trianon like birds in an aviary, without any real regard to their nature or the right way of using them ; that these devotees of the book-chase were like an invalid master of hounds, keeping the pack in a gilded kennel without any exercise or any chance of practical work. We think that something perhaps might be said on the other side. The Duchesse de Berry in our own time possessed a serious collection, made under her own direction, in which might be found the *Livre d'Heures* of Henri Deux, the prayer-book of Joanna of Naples, the best books of Marguerite de Valois and Marie Leczinska. The Princess



Pauline Buonaparte was the owner of a well-selected library. But our best example is Madame Elisabeth, the ill-fated daughter of France, who was dragged from her books at Montreuil in the tumults of 1789. Only a short time before she had been absorbed in her simple collection. In the spring of 1786 she gave up her mornings to its arrangement. 'My library,' she wrote, 'is nearly finished: the desks are being put up, and you cannot imagine the fine effect of the books.' On September the 15th she writes to her friend again: 'Montreuil and its mistress get on as well as two sweethearts. I am writing in the small room at the end; the books are settled in their shelves, and my library is really a little gem.' On the 5th of October she was standing on the terrace by the library-window, when she saw a crowd coming along the Sèvres road, and heard the noise of pipes and drums; and on the same day she was forced to leave Montreuil, and never saw her books again.

## CHAPTER X.

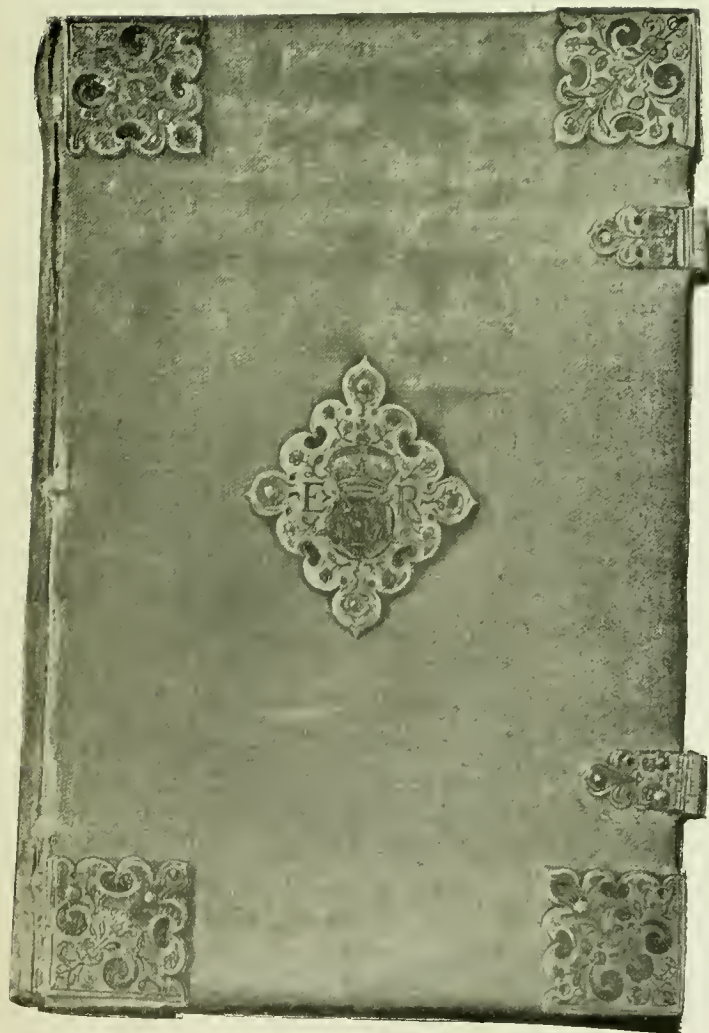
THE OLD ROYAL LIBRARY—FAIRFAX—COTTON—  
HARLEY—THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE.

HENRY VII. was the founder of a royal collection which in time became a constituent portion of the library at the British Museum. Careful as he was of his money, the King endeavoured to buy every book published in French, and he acquired the whole of Vérard's series of classics, printed on vellum with initials in gold and gorgeous illuminations, in some of which the printer is shown presenting his books to the royal collector. Henry VIII. established the separate library which was long maintained at St. James's; he intended it mainly for the education of princes of the blood royal, and supplied it with a quantity of early-printed books and a miscellaneous gathering of wreckage from the monasteries. During several succeeding reigns there were 'studies' and galleries of books at Whitehall and Windsor Castle, at Greenwich and Oatlands, or wherever the Court might be held. It is said that in the time of Henry VIII. the best English collection belonged to Bishop Fisher. 'He had the notablest library,' said Fuller, 'two long galleries full, the books sorted in stalls, and a register of the name of each book at the

end of its stall.' This great storehouse of knowledge the Bishop had intended to transfer to St. John's College at Cambridge; but on his disgrace it was seized by Thomas Cromwell and dispersed among his greedy retainers.

Under the Protector Somerset the Protestant feeling ran high. Martin Bucer's manuscripts were bought for the young King; and the Reformer's printed books were divided between Archbishop Cranmer and the Duchess of Somerset. About the same time an order was issued in the name of Edward VI. for purging the King's library at Westminster of missals, legends, and other 'superstitious volumes'; and their 'garniture,' according to the fashion of the time, was bestowed as a perquisite upon a grasping courtier.

Queen Elizabeth was naturally fond of fine books. She had a small collection before she reached the throne, and became in due course the recipient of a number of splendid presentation volumes. There is a copy of a French poem in her praise in the public library at Oxford: its pages are full of exquisite portraits and designs, and on the sides there are 'brilliant bosses composed of humming-birds' feathers.' As a child she had bound her books in needle-work, or in 'blue corded silk, with gold and silver thread,' in the style afterwards adopted by the sisters at Little Gidding in the time of Charles I. Her Testament, most carefully covered by her own handiwork, contains a note quoted by Mr. Macray in his 'Annals



BINDING EXECUTED FOR QUEEN ELIZABETH.



of the Bodleian Library'; it refers to her walks in the field of Scripture, where she plucked up the 'goodlie greene herbes,' which she afterwards ate by her reading, 'and chawed by musing.' Her gallery at Whitehall made a gallant show of MSS. and classics in red velvet, with gilt clasps and jewelled sides, and all the French and Italian books standing by in morocco and gold. Archbishop Parker tried to induce her to establish a national library; but the Queen seems to have cared little about the plan. She allowed the Archbishop on his own behalf to seek out the books remaining from the suppressed monasteries: at another time he obtained leave to recover as many as he could find of Cranmer's books. He tracked some of them to the house of one Dr. Nevinson, who was forced to disgorge his treasures. Parker kept a staff of scribes and painters in miniature, and had his own press and fount of type. He published many scarce tracts to save them from oblivion. Others he ordered to be copied in manuscript, and these and all his ancient books he caused to be 'trimly covered'; so that we may say with Dibdin, 'a more determined book-fancier existed not in Great Britain.' He gave some of his books to 'his nurse Corpus Christi' at Cambridge, and some to the public library; and his gift to the College was compared to 'the sun of our English antiquity,' eclipsed only by the shadow of Cotton's palace of learning.

One would like to fancy a symposium of the great

men talking over their books, in the room where Ben Jonson was king, and where

‘Mellifluous Shakespeare, whose enchanting quill  
Commanded mirth and passion, was but Will.’

Jonson’s books, as was said of himself, were like the great Spanish galleons, bulky folios with ‘*Sum Ben Jonson*’ boldly inscribed. We know little about Shakespeare’s books, except that they probably went to the New Place and passed among the chattels to Susanna Hall and her husband. His Florio’s version of Montaigne is in the British Museum, if the authenticity of his signature can be trusted. His neat Aldine Ovid is at the Bodleian, inscribed with his initials, and a note: ‘this little booke of Ovid was given to me by W. Hall, who sayd it was once Will Shakspere’s.’

We would call to our meeting Gabriel Harvey with his new Italian books and pamphlets; and Spenser, if possible, should be there; Dr. Dee would tell the piteous story of his four thousand volumes, printed and unprinted, Greek, in French, and High-Dutch MSS., etc., and of forty years spent in gathering the books that were all on their way to the pawnshop. He might have told the fortunes of all the books with the help of his magical mirrors and crystals. Francis Bacon’s store was to increase and multiply, to adorn the library at Cambridge and fill the shelves at Gray’s Inn; Lord Leicester’s books, with their livery of the ‘bear and ragged staff,’ were to freeze for ages in the galleries at Lambeth. We should have Ascham inveighing



against the ancients and their idle and blind way of living: 'in our father's time,' he says, 'nothing was read but books of feigned chivalry'; but Captain Cox would come forth to meet him, attired as in the tournament at Kenilworth, or in the picture which Dibdin has extracted from Laneham. 'Captain Cox came marching on, clean trussed and gartered above the knee, all fresh in a velvet cap: an odd man, I promise you: by profession a mason, and that right skilful and very cunning in fence. . . . As for King Arthur and Huon of Bourdeaux, . . . the Fryar and the Boy, Elynor Rumming, and the Nut-brown Maid, with many more than I can rehearse, I believe he has them all at his fingers' ends.'

James I., as became a 'Solomon,' was the master of many books; but not being a 'fancier' he gave them shabby coverings and scribbled idle notes on their margins. He is forgiven for being a pedant, since Buchanan said it was the best that could be made of him; it is difficult to be patient about his hint to the Dutch that it would be well to burn the old scholar Vorstius instead of making him a professor at Leyden. He seems to have done more harm than good to the libraries in his own possession. We know how he broke into a 'noble speech' when he visited Bodley at Oxford, with the librarian trembling lest the King should see a book by Buchanan, who had often whipped his royal pupil in days gone by: 'If I were not a King I would be an University-man, and if it was so that I must be a

prisoner I would desire no other durance than to be chained in that library with so many noble authors.'

The King gave Sir Thomas Bodley a warrant under the Privy Seal to take what books he pleased from any of the royal palaces and libraries ; 'howbeit,' said Bodley, 'for that the place at Whitehall is over the Queen's chamber, I must needs attend her departure from thence, whereof at present there is no certainty known : how I shall proceed for other places I have not yet resolved.'

Prince Henry had a more refined taste. The dilettanti of the Prince's set took no part in the drunken antics of the Court, where Goring was master of the games, but Sir John Millicent 'made the best *extempore* fool.' The Prince bought almost the whole of the monastic library originally formed by Henry Lord Arundel : about forty volumes had already been given by Lord Lumley to Oxford.

There was some danger that the books at Whitehall would be destroyed in the fury of the Civil War ; but almost all of them were saved by the personal exertions of Hugh Peters, when Selden had told him that there was not the like of these rare monuments in Christendom, outside the Vatican. Whitelocke was appointed their keeper, and to his deputy, John Dury, we owe the first English treatise on library management. Thomas, Lord Fairfax, did a similar good service at Oxford. When the city was surrendered in 1646 the first thing that the General did was to place a guard of soldiers at the Bodleian.





SIR ROBERT COTTON

There was more hurt done by the Cavaliers, said Aubrey, in the way of embezzlement and cutting the chains off the books, than was ever done afterwards. Fairfax, he adds, was himself a lover of learning, and had he not taken this special care the library would have been destroyed; 'for there were ignorant senators enough who would have been content to have it so.' As a rule, we must admit that the Puritans were friendly to literature, with a very natural exception as to merely ecclesiastical records. Oliver Cromwell gave some of the Barocci MSS. to the University of Oxford; and the preservation of Usher's library at Trinity College, Dublin, was due to the public spirit of the Cromwellian soldiers, officers and men having subscribed alike for its purchase 'out of emulation to a former noble action of Queen Elizabeth's army in Ireland.'

Sir Robert Cotton began about 1588 to gather materials for a history of England. With the help of Camden and Sir Henry Spelman he obtained nearly a thousand volumes of records and documents; and these he arranged under a system, by which they are still cited, in fourteen wainscot presses marked with the names of the twelve Cæsars, Cleopatra, and F<sup>a</sup>ustina. He was so rich in State Papers that, as Fuller said, 'the fountains were fain to fetch water from the stream,' and the secretaries and clerks of the Council were glad in many cases to borrow back valuable originals. Sir Robert was at one time accused of selling secrets to the Spanish ambassador,

and various excuses were found for closing the library, until at last it was declared to be unfit for public use on account of its political contents. He often told his friends that this tyranny had broken his heart, and shortly before his death in 1631 he informed the Lords of the Council that their conduct was the cause of his mortal malady. The library was restored to his son Sir Thomas: and in Sir John Cotton's time the public made a considerable use of its contents; but it seems to have been still a matter of favour, for Burnet complains that he was refused admittance unless he could procure a recommendation from the Archbishop and the Secretary of State. Anthony Wood gives a pleasant account of his visit: 'Posting off forthwith he found Sir John Cotton in his house, joining almost to Westminster Hall: he was then practising on his lute, and when he had done he came out and received Wood kindly, and invited him to dinner, and directed him to Mr. Pearson who kept the key. Here was another trouble; for the said Mr. Pearson being a lodger in the shop of a bookseller living in Little Britain, Wood was forced to walk thither, and much ado there was to find him.' The library was afterwards moved to Essex Street, and then to Ashburnham House in Little Dean's Yard, where the great fire took place in 1731, which some attributed to 'Dr. Bentley's villainy.' Dean Stanley has told us how the Headmaster of Westminster, coming to the rescue, saw a figure issue from the burning house, 'in his dressing-gown, with a flowing



wig on his head, and a huge volume under his arm.' This was Dr. Bentley the librarian, doing his best to save the Alexandrian MS. of the New Testament. Mr. Speaker Onslow and some of the other trustees worked hard in the crowd at pumping, breaking open the presses, and throwing the volumes out at a window. The destruction was lamentable; but wonders have been done in extending the shrivelled documents and rendering their ashes legible. The public use of the collection had been already regulated by Parliament when a comprehensive Act was passed in 1753, and the nation acquired under one title the Cottonian Library, Sir Hans Sloane's Museum, the Earl of Oxford's pamphlets and manuscripts, and all that remained of the ancient royal collections.

Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford, made a great purchase in 1705, and spent the next twenty years in building on that foundation. His son, Earl Edward, threw himself with zeal into the undertaking, and left at his death about 50,000 books, besides a huge body of manuscripts and an incredible number of pamphlets. We shall quote from the sketch by Oldys, who shared with Dr. Johnson the task of compiling the catalogue. 'The Earl had the rarest books of all countries, languages, and sciences': thousands of fragments, some a thousand years old: vellum books, of which some had been scraped and used again as 'palimpsests': 'a great collection of Bibles, and editions of all the first printed books, classics, and others of our own country, ecclesiastical as well as civil, by Caxton,



Wynkyn de Worde, Pynson, Berthelet, Rastall, Grafton, and the greatest number of pamphlets and English heads of any other person: abundance of ledgers, chartularies, etc., and original letters of eminent persons as many as would fill two hundred volumes; all the collections of his librarian Humphrey Wanley, of Stow, Sir Symonds D'Ewes, Prynne, Bishop Stillingfleet, John Bagford, Le Neve, and the flower of a hundred other libraries.'

A few of these collections ought to be separately mentioned. Stow had died in great poverty, and indeed had been for many years a licensed beggar or bedesman; but in his youth he had been enabled by Parker's protection to make a good collection out of the spoils of the Abbeys; during the Elizabethan persecution he was nearly convicted of treason for being in possession of remnants of Popery, and found it very hard to convince the stern inquisitor that he was only a harmless antiquary. Sir Symonds D'Ewes had endeavoured by his will, which he modelled upon that of De Thou, to preserve undispersed through the ages to come the 'precious library' bequeathed in a touching phrase 'to Adrian D'Ewes, my young son, yet lying in the cradle.' Notwithstanding all his bonds and penalties the event which he dreaded came to pass. Harley had advised Queen Anne to buy a collection that included so many precious documents and records: the Queen, wishing perhaps to rebuff her minister, said that it was indeed no merit in her to prefer arts to arms, 'but while the blood and

honour of the nation was at stake in her wars she could not, till she had secured her living subjects an honourable peace, bestow their money upon dead letters'; and so, we are told, 'the Earl stretched his own purse, and gave £6000 for the library.' Peter Le Neve spent his life in gathering important papers about coat-armour and pedigrees. He had intended them for the use of his fellow Kings-at-Arms; but it was said that he had some pique against the Heralds' College, and so 'cut them off with a volume.' The rest went to the auction-room: 'The Earl of Oxford,' said Oldys, 'will have a sweep at it'; and we know that the cast was successful. As for John Bagford, the scourge of the book-world, we have little to say in his defence. In his audacious design of compiling a history of printing he mangled and mutilated about 25,000 volumes, tearing out the title pages and colophons and shaving the margins even of such priceless jewels of bibliography as the Bible of Gutenberg and the of 'Polyglott' Cardinal Ximenes. He cannot avoid conviction as a literary monster; yet his contemporaries regarded him as a miracle of erudition, and Mr. Pollard has lately put in a kindly plea in mitigation. We are reminded that Bagford made no money by his crimes, that he took walking-tours through Holland and Germany in search of bargains, and that he made 'a priceless collection of ballads.' It might be said also for a further plea that what one age regards as sport another condemns as butchery. The Ferrar family at Little Gidding were the inven-

tors of 'pasting-printing,' as they called their barbarous mode of embellishment ; and Charles I. himself, in Laud's presence, called their largest scrap-book 'the Emperor of all books,' and 'the incomparablest book this will be, as ever eye beheld.' The huge volume made up for Prince Charles out of pictures and scraps of text was joyfully pronounced to be 'the gallantest greatest book in the world.' The practice of 'grangerising,' or stuffing out an author with prints and pages from other works, was even praised by Dibdin as 'useful and entertaining,' though in our own time it is rightly condemned as a malpractice.

Next to Harley's library in importance was that of John Moore, Bishop of Ely, of which Burnet said that it was a treasure beyond what one would think the life and labour of a man could compass. Oldys has described it in his notes upon London libraries, which it is fair to remember were based on Bagford's labours, as regards the earlier entries. 'The Bishop,' he says, 'had a prodigious collection of books, written as well as printed on vellum, some very ancient, others finely illuminated. He had a Capgrave's Chronicle, books of the first printing at Maintz and other places abroad, as also at Oxford, St. Alban's, Westminster, etc.' There was some talk of uniting it with Harley's collection ; but in 1715 it was bought by George I. for 6000 guineas, and was presented to the Public Library at Cambridge.

The University had possessed a library from very early times. It owed much to the liberality of several

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successive Bishops of Durham. Theodore Beza and Lord Bacon were afterwards among its most distinguished benefactors. Bishop Hacket made a donation of nearly fifteen hundred volumes: and in 1647 a large collection of Eastern MSS., brought home from Italy by George Thomason, was added by an ordinance of the Commonwealth. But, until the royal gift of the Bishop of Ely's books, the University received no such extraordinary favour of fortune as came to the sister institution through the splendid beneficence of Bodley.

## CHAPTER XI.

BODLEY—DIGBY—LAUD—SELDEN—ASHMOLE.

THE University of Oxford still offers public thanks for Bodley's generosity upon his calendar-day. The ancient library of Duke Humphrey and his pious predecessors had, as we have seen, been plundered and devastated. But Sir Thomas Bodley, when retiring from office in 1597, conceived the idea of restoring it to prosperity again; 'and in a few years so richly endowed it with books, revenues, and buildings, that it became one of the most famous in the world.' Bodley has left us his own account of the matter:—'I concluded at the last to set up my staff at the library-door in Oxon. I found myself furnished with such four kinds of aids as, unless I had them all, I had no hope of success. For without some kind of knowledge, without some purse-ability to go through with the charge, without good store of friends to further the design, and without special good leisure to follow such a work, it could not but have proved a vain attempt.' When Meric Casaubon visited Oxford a few years afterwards he found the hall filled with books. 'Do not imagine,' he wrote, 'that there are as many MSS. here as in the royal library at Paris. There are a good many in England,

though nothing to what our King possesses ; but the number of printed books is wonderful, and increasing every year. During my visit to Oxford I passed whole days in this place. The books cannot be taken away, but it is open to scholars for seven or eight hours a day, and one may always see a number of them revelling at their banquet, which gave me no small pleasure.' Bodley was not one of those who like libraries to be open to all comers. 'A grant of such scope,' said his statute, 'would but minister an occasion of pestering all the room with their gazing ; and the babbling and trampling up and down may disturb out of measure the endeavours of those that are studious. Admission, from the first, was granted only to graduates, and every one on his entrance had to take the oath against 'razing, defacing, cutting, noting, slurring, and mangling the books.'

Sir Thomas was ably seconded by 'good Mr. James,' his first librarian, and by the bookseller John Bill, who collected for him at Frankfort and Lyons and other likely places on the Continent. The most minute rules were laid down for the protection of the books against embezzlement. The volumes were chained to the desks, and readers were entreated to fasten the clasps and strings, to untangle the chains, and to leave the books as they found them. Bodley was always enquiring about the store of chains and wires. 'I pray you write to John Smith,' he said to James, 'that I may be furnished against Easter with a thousand chains'; he hopes to bring enough for

that number, 'if God send my books safe out of Italy.' About the time of the King's visit he writes that he has sent a case of wires and clips by the carrier, 'which I make no doubt but you may in good time get fastened to your books.' His carefulness is shown by his directions for cleaning the room: 'I do desire that, after the library is well swept and the books cleansed from dust, you would cause the floor to be well washed and dried, and after rubbed with a little rosemary, for a stronger scent I should not like.' He often writes about his Continental purchases. John Bill, he says, had been at Venice, Florence, and Rome, and half a score other Italian cities, 'and hath bought us many books as he knew I had not, amounting to the sum of at least £400.' With regard to certain duplicates he says: 'the fault is mine and John Bill's, who dealing with multitudes must perforce make many scapes.' 'Jo. Bill hath gotten everywhere what the place would afford, for his commission was large, his leisure very good, and his payment sure at home.' The agent bought largely at Seville; 'but the people's usage towards all of our nation is so cruel and malicious that he was utterly discouraged.'

Sir Thomas Bodley would accept a very small contribution or the gift of a single volume of any respectable sort. But he would have no 'riff-raff,' as he told Dr. James, and would certainly have scorned the almanacs and play-books acquired after his death under a bequest from the melancholy Burton, and the ships' logs and 'pickings of chandlers' and grocers'







SIR THOMAS BODLEY.

papers' which were received long afterwards as part of Dr. Rawlinson's great donation. He was always grateful for a well-meant present. He writes to his librarian: 'Mr. Schoolmaster of Winton's gift of Melanchthon and Huss I do greatly esteem, and will thank him, if you will, by letter.' Some of the earliest gifts were of a splendid kind. Lord Essex sent three hundred folios, including a fine Budæus from the library of Jerome Osorio, captured at Faro in Portugal when the fleet was returning from Cadiz. Bodley himself gave a magnificent *Romance of Alexander* that had belonged in 1466 to Richard Woodville, Lord Rivers. The librarian contributed about a hundred volumes, including early MSS. procured from Balliol and Merton by his persuasion. Merton College, for its own part, sent nearly two-score volumes of 'singular good books in folio.' Sir Henry Savile gave the 'Gospels' in Russian and the Greek 'Commentaries on St. Augustine,' and William Camden out of his poverty brought a few manuscripts and ancient books. Lawrence Bodley, the founder's brother, came with thirty-seven 'very fair and new-bought works in folio, and Lord Lumley with forty volumes reserved out of the library sold to the Prince. Lord Montacute contributed the works of the Fathers, 'in sixty-six costly great volumes, all bought of set purpose and fairly bound with his arms,' Mr. Gent a number of medical treatises, Sir John Fortescue five good Greek MSS. and forty other books. We only mention a few of the choicer specimens or note the re-

appearance of old friends described in earlier chapters. In 1602 there arrived from Exeter Bishop Leofric's vellum service-book, with several others that had lodged in its company since the days of Edward the Confessor. Next year came one of the exquisite 'Gospels' which Pope Gregory, as men said, had given to the missionary Augustine; the other had been included in Parker's gift to Corpus Christi. Sir Henry Wotton contributed a valuable Koran, to which in later years he added Tycho Brahé's 'Astronomy' with the author's MS. notes. Thomas Allen gave a relic of St. Dunstan, containing the Saint's portrait drawn by himself, and one of Grostête's books that had been given by the Friars to Dr. Gascoigne. Mr. Allen gave in all twelve rare MSS. besides printed books, 'with a purpose to do more'; and Bodley commends him as a most careful provoker and solicitor of benefactions. He was the mathematician, or rather the cabalistical astrologer, who taught Sir Kenelm Digby, introducing that romantic giant to the art of ruling the stars, and how to melt and puff 'until the green dragon becomes the golden goose,' and all the other *arcana* of alchemy.

Digby was a good friend to the Bodleian. When quite a youth he cut down fifty great oaks to purchase a building-site near Exeter College. The laying of the foundation-stone in 1634 was amusingly described by Wood. The Heads of Houses were all assembled, and the University musicians 'had sounded a lesson on their wind-music,' standing on the leads at the west

end of the library ; but while the Vice-Chancellor was placing a piece of gold on the first stone, the earth fell in, and the scaffold broke, 'so that all those who were thereon, the Proctors, Principals of Halls, etc., fell down all together one upon another, among whom the under-butler of Exeter College had his shoulder broken or put out of joint, and a scholar's arm bruised.' It was at this time that Digby made a generous gift of books, all tall copies in good bindings with his initials on the panels at the back. Among them were early works on science by Grostête and Roger Bacon, besides histories and chronicles. Many of these books had belonged to Thomas Allen, who gave them to Digby as a token of regard. Sir Kenelm wrote about them to Sir Robert Cotton, who was to thank Allen for his kindness: 'in my hands they will not be with less honourable memory of him than in any man's else.' He felt sure that Allen would have wished them to be freely used: 'all good things are the better the more they are communicated'; but the University was to be the absolute mistress, 'to dispose of them as she pleaseth.' Mr. Macray quotes another passage about two trunks of Arabic MSS. Digby had given them to Laud for St. John's College or the Bodleian, as he might prefer, but nothing had been heard about their arrival. He promised more books from his own library, which had been taken over to France after the Civil War broke out. The books, however, remained abroad, and were confiscated on Digby's death as being the chattels of an alien

resident ; but either by favour or purchase they soon became the property of the Earl of Bristol, and were afterwards sold by auction in London. Two volumes were purchased for the Bodleian in 1825 which must be regarded with the deepest interest. The 'Bacon' and 'Proclus' had belonged to the Oxford Friars, to Gascoigne, to the astrologer secluded in Gloucester Hall. Digby had written a note in each that it was the book of the University Library, as witnessed by his initials ; but it had taken them many generations to make the last stage of their journey from his book-shelf to their acknowledged home at Oxford.

It was chiefly through the generosity of Laud that the Bodleian obtained its wealth of Oriental learning. But it was not only in the East that the Archbishop devoted himself to book-collecting. Like Dr. Dee, he saw the value of Ireland as a hunting-ground, and employed his emissaries to procure painted service-books, the records of native princes, and the archives of the Anglo-Norman nobility. Among his most precious acquisitions was an Irish MS. containing the *Psalter of Cashel*, Cormac's still unpublished *Glossary*, and some of the poems ascribed to St. Patrick and St. Columba. On the Continent the armies of Gustavus Adolphus were ravaging the cities of Germany ; and Laud's agents were always at hand to rescue the fair books and vellums from the Swedish pikemen. In this way he obtained the printed Missal of 1481 and a number of Latin MSS. from the College of Würzburg, and other valuable books from monasteries near Mainz



and Eberbach in the Duchy of Baden. It appears by Mr. Macray's *Annals* that his gifts to the University between 1635 and 1640 amounted to about thirteen hundred volumes, in more than twenty languages. To our minds the most attractive will always be the very copy of the 'Acts' perused by the Venerable Bede, and the 'Anglo-Saxon Chronicle' compiled in the Abbey of Peterborough. The men of Laud's age would perhaps have attached greater importance to the Eastern MSS. acquired by the Archbishop through Robert Huntingdon, the consul at Aleppo, or the Greek library of Francesco Barocci, which he persuaded William Earl of Pembroke to present to the University. In describing the Persian MSS. of his last gift, Laud specially mentioned one as containing a history of the world from the Creation to the end of the Saracen Empire, and as being of a very great value. He shows the greatest anxiety for the safety of the volumes: 'I would to God the place for them were ready, that they might be set up safe, and chained as the other books are.' He gave many books to St. John's College; and he retained a large collection in his Palace at Lambeth, which was bestowed on Hugh Peters after his death; it is satisfactory, however, to remember that 'the study of books' was recovered at the Restoration, and that Mr. Ashmole was appointed to examine the accounts of the fanatic.

Laud was not the first to seek for the treasures of the East. Before his gifts began Sir Thomas Roe, who sat for Oxford with Selden, had presented to the



Bodleian a number of MSS. acquired during his embassy to Constantinople. Joseph Scaliger, the restorer of Arabic learning in the West, had been especially interested in Samaritan literature, and had corresponded about a copy of the Pentateuch with one Rabbi Eleazar, 'who dwelt in Sichem'; and, though the papers fell into the hands of robbers, they were afterwards delivered to Peiresc. The traveller Minutius had returned with Coptic service-books, and Peiresc, captivated with a new branch of learning, established an agency for Eastern books at Smyrna. The Capucin Gilles de Loche averred that he had seen 8000 volumes in a monastery of the Nitrian Desert, 'many of which seemed to be of the age of St. Anthony': he had pushed into Abyssinia and had heard the 'uncouth chaunts and clashing cymbals,' as Mr. Curzon heard them in a later age; and he had even cast his eyes on the *Book of Enoch* with pallid figures and a shining black text; and Peiresc was so inflamed with a desire to buy it at any price that in the end he acquired it. The books seen by the Capucin in the Convent of the Syrians, stored 'in the vault beyond the oil-cellar,' have become our national property; and if there are not many of the age of St. Anthony we have at least the volume, completed by the help of a monk's note of the eleventh century, and originally written in the year 411 'at Ur of the Chaldees by the hand of a man named Jacob.'

Much less attention seems to have been paid to the collection of Hebrew books than to those in Coptic

and Arabic. Selden, it is true, gave to the University Library 'such of his Talmudical and Rabbinical books as were not already to be found there,' and purchases were made at the Crevenna sale in Amsterdam and at a sale during the present century of the MSS. of Matheo Canonici at Venice. The chief source from which the Bodleian was supplied was the collection formed before 1735 by David Oppenheimer, the Chief Rabbi at Prague. In the British Museum are the Hebrew books presented by Solomon da Costa in 1759. The donor's letter contained a few interesting details. There were three Biblical MSS. and a hundred and eighty printed books, all in very old editions: 'They were bound by order of King Charles II., and marked with his cypher, and were purchased by me in the days of my youth, and the particulars are they not written in the book that is found therewith?' They had been collected under the Commonwealth, and had afterwards been sent to the binder by King Charles; but as the bill was never paid they lay in the shop until the reign of George I., when they were sold to pay expenses, and so came into the possession of the excellent Solomon da Costa.

The best antiquarian collections were those given to Oxford by Dr. Rawlinson in the last century, by Richard Gough in 1809, and by Mr. Douce in 1834. Mr. Macray has enumerated nearly thirty libraries which Richard Rawlinson had laid under contribution, and his list includes such headings as the Miscellaneous Papers of Samuel Pepys, the Thurloe

State Papers, the remains of Thomas Hearne, and documents belonging to Gale and Michael Maittaire, Sir Joseph Jekyll, and Walter Clavell of the Temple. He cites a letter written by Rawlinson in 1741, as showing the curious accidents by which some of these documents were preserved: 'My agent last week met with some papers of Archbishop Wake at a chandler's shop: this is unpardonable in his executors, as all his MSS. were left to Christ Church; but *quære* whether these did not fall into some servant's hands, who was ordered to burn them, and Mr. Martin Folkes ought to have seen that done.'

Mr. Gough's collection related chiefly to English topography, Anglo-Saxon and Northern literature, and printed service-books; it is stated to contain more than 3700 volumes, all given by a generous bequest to form 'an Antiquary's Closet.' Mr. Douce's large library contained a number of Missals and *Livres d'Heures*. Some of these are described as 'priceless gems rivalled only by the Bedford Missal,' especially one prayer-book illuminated for Leonora, Duchess of Urbino, another that belonged to Marie de Medici, and 'a Psalter on purple vellum, probably of the ninth century, which came from the old Royal Library of France.' Among the most important of the earlier benefactions was the gift of the Dodsworth Papers by Thomas Lord Fairfax. The archives of the Northern monasteries had been kept for a time in eight chests in St. Mary's Tower at York. Roger Dodsworth, Sir William

Dugdale's colleague in the preparation of the *Monasticon*, made copies of many of these documents; and when the tower was blown up in the siege of 1644 he was one of the zealous antiquarians who saved the mouldering fragments on the breach. His whole store of archæological records became the property of Fairfax at his death. They are of great historical importance, but at one time they were strangely neglected. Wood says that all the papers were nearly spoiled in a damp season, when he obtained leave to dry them on the leads near the schools; but though it cost him a month's labour he undertook it with pleasure 'out of respect to the memory of Mr. Dodsworth.'

The Ashmolean books were some years ago transferred to the Bodleian, but for several generations there was a strange assortment of antiquarian libraries gathered together in the Museum which Ashmole developed out of Madam Tradescant's 'closet of curiosities.' Here were the books of the shiftless John Aubrey, described by Wood as 'sometimes little better than crazed': and here, according to Wood's dying wish, lay his own books, 'and papers and notes about two bushels full,' side by side with Dugdale's manuscripts. Dibdin quotes several extracts from Elias Ashmole's diary, to show the old book-hunter's prowess in the chase. He buys on one day Mr. Milbourn's books, and on the next all that Mr. Hawkins left; he sees Mrs. Backhouse of London about the purchase of her late husband's

library. In 1667 he writes: 'I bought Mr. John Booker's study of books, and gave £140.' Being somewhat of an alchemist, he was glad to become the owner of Lilly's volumes on magic, and most of Dr. Dee's collection came into his hands through the kindness of his friend Mr. Wale. When Ashmole brought out his book upon the Order of the Garter he became the associate of the nobility; and we will leave him feasting at his house in South Lambeth, clad in a velvet gown, and wearing his great chain 'of philagreen links in great knobs,' with ninety loops of gold.

In noticing the lawyers who have been eminent for their devotion to books we might go back to very early times. We ought at least to mention Sergeant William Fletewode, Recorder of London in the reign of Elizabeth, who bought a library out of Missenden Abbey, consisting mainly of the romances of chivalry; it was sold with its later additions in 1774 under the title of *Bibliotheca Monastico-Fletewodiana*. The Lord Chancellor Ellesmere in the same reign formed a collection of old English poetry, which became the foundation of a celebrated library belonging to the Dukes of Bridgewater and afterwards to the Marquis of Stafford. Sir Julius Cæsar, who was Master of the Rolls under James I., was 'often reflected upon' for his want of legal knowledge; but he collected a quantity of good MSS. which passed into the library of Mr. Carteret-Webb, after a narrow escape of being sold for £10 to a

cheesemonger. They are now in the British Museum together with a box of exquisite miniature classics, with which he used to solace himself on a journey. Arthur, Earl of Anglesea, was another distinguished lawyer, who was famous for having acquired the finest specimens of books in 'all faculties, arts, and languages.'

The great bulk of Selden's books were given by his executors to the Bodleian; but several chests of monastic manuscripts were sent to the Inner Temple, and perished in a fire. He passed his whole life as a scholar; and yet, it is said, he deplored the loss of his time, and wished that he had neglected what the world calls learning, and had rather 'executed the office of a justice of the peace.' Sir Matthew Hale should be remembered for his gift of MSS. to Lincoln's Inn. He made it a condition that they should never be printed; and the language of his will shows a certain dread of dealing lightly with the secrets of tenure and prerogative. 'My desire is that they be kept safe and all together in remembrance of me. They were fit to be bound in leather, and chained and kept in archives: they are a treasure not fit for every man's view, nor is every man capable of making use of them.'

We shall close our account of the century with a few words about Dr. Bernard, a stiff, hard, and straightforward reader, whose library of medicine and general literature was sold by auction in 1698. 'Being a person who collected his books not for

ostentation or ornament he seemed no more solicitous about their dress than his own'; and therefore, says the compiler of his catalogue, 'you'll find that a gilt back or a large margin was very seldom any inducement to him to buy. It was sufficient to him that he had the book.' 'The garniture of a book,' he would observe, 'was apt to recommend it to a great part of our modern collectors'; he himself was not a mere nomenclator, and versed only in title-pages, 'but had made that just and laudable use of his books which would become all those that set up for collectors.' He was the possessor of thirteen fine Caxtons, which fetched altogether less than two guineas at his sale; the biddings seem to have been by the penny; and Mr. Clarke in his *Repertorium Bibliographicum* observed that the penny at that time seems to have been more than the equivalent of our pound sterling in the purchase of black-letter rarities.



## CHAPTER XII.

### GROLIER AND HIS SUCCESSORS.

JEAN GROLIER, the prince of book-collectors, was born at Lyons in 1479. His family had come originally from Verona, but had long been naturalised in France. Several of his relations held civic offices; Etienne Grolier, his father, was in charge of the taxes in the district of Lyons, and was appointed treasurer of the Milanese territories at that time in the occupation of the French. Jean Grolier succeeded his father in both these employments. He was treasurer of Milan in 1510, when Pope Julius formed the league against the French, which was crushed at the Battle of Ravenna; and for nearly twenty years afterwards Grolier took a principal part in administering the affairs of the province. Young, rich, and powerful, a lover of the arts and a bountiful patron of learning, he became an object of almost superstitious respect to the authors and booksellers of Italy. He was eager to do all in his power towards improving the machinery and diffusing the products of science. He loved his books not only for what they taught but also as specimens of typography and artistic decoration. To own one or two examples from his library is to take high rank

in the army of bookmen. The amateur of bindings need learn little more when he comprehends the stages of Grolier's literary passion, its fervent and florid beginnings, the majesty of its progress, and its austere simplicities in old age.

Grolier was the personal friend of Gryphius, the printer of Lyons, and of all the members of the House of Aldus at Venice. Erasmus, who was revered by Grolier as his god-father in matters of learning, once paid a compliment to the treasurer, which was not far from the truth. 'You owe nothing to books,' he wrote, 'but they owe a good deal to you, because it is by your help that they will go down to posterity.' The nature of Grolier's relations with the Venetian publishers appears in his letters to Francis of Asola about the printing of a work by Budæus. He writes from Milan in the year 1519: 'I am thinking every day about sending you the "Budæus" for publication in your most elegant style. You must add to your former favours by being very diligent in bringing out my friend's book, of which I now send you the manuscript revised and corrected by the author. You must take the greatest care, dear Francis, to present it to the public in an accurate shape, and this indeed I must beg and implore. I want beauty and refinement besides; but this we shall get from your choice paper, unworn type, and breadth of margin. In a word, I want to have it in the same style as your "Politian." If all this extra luxury should put you to loss, I will make it good.





BINDING EXECUTED FOR GROLIET.

I am most anxious that the manuscript should be followed exactly, without any change or addition ; and so, my dear Francis, fare you well.' The book appeared with a dedication to Grolier himself, in which Francis of Asola recounts the many favours received by the elder Aldus in his lifetime, by himself, and by his father Andreas. The presentation copy was magnificently printed on vellum, with initials in gold and colours. Grolier inscribed it with his name and device, so that it became easy to verify its subsequent history. It appeared among the books of the Prince de Soubise, and belonged afterwards to the Count Macarthy, and in 1815 was bought by Mr. Payne and transferred to the Althorp Library.

Grolier's books were generally stamped with the words '*et Amicorum*' immediately after his name, to indicate as we suppose that they were the common property of himself and his friends, although it has been suggested that he was referring to his possession of duplicates. Another of his marks was the use of some pious phrase, such as a wish that his portion might be in 'the land of the living,' which was either printed on the cover or written on a fly-leaf, if the volume were the gift of a friend. In the use of these distinctions he seems to have been preceded by Thomas Maioli, a book-collector of a family residing at Asti, of whom very little is known apart from his ownership of books in magnificent bindings. Grolier may have borrowed the phrase about his friends from

a celebrated Flemish collector called Marcus Laurinus, or Mark Lauwrin of Watervliet, who was in constant correspondence with the Treasurer about their cabinets of medals and coins. Rabelais had a few valuable books, which he stamped with a similar design in Greek, and the Latin form occurs in many other libraries. We are inclined to refer the origin of the practice to a letter written by Philelpho in 1427, in which he tells his correspondent of the Greek proverb that all things are common among friends.

Grolier's love of learning is shown by his own letters, and by the statements contained in the books that were so constantly dedicated to his name. To Beatus Rhenanus he wrote, with reference to an approaching visit: 'Oh, what a festal day, to be marked (as they say) with a pure white stone, when I am able to pay my humble duty to my own Rhenanus; and you see how great are my demands when you are entered as mine in my accounts.' As controller of the Milanese district he became the object of much adulation, for which his flatterers had to atone when the French occupation came to an end. The dedication of a certain dialogue affords an instance in point. Stefano Negri sent his book to Grolier in a splendid shape. The presentation copy on vellum may be seen at the British Museum among the treasures of the Grenville Library. The writer represents himself in the preface as going about in search of a patron. He sees Mercury descending from the clouds with a message from



Minerva. 'There is one man whom the Goddess holds dear, struggling like Ulysses through the flood of this stormy life: he is known as Grolier to the world.' Nay, what need have you, says the author, to sing the praises of that famous man? 'You must confess, even if you like it not, that he is most noble in his country and family, most wealthy in fortune, and most fair and beautiful in his bodily gifts.'

As patron of all the arts the treasurer became the friend of Francino Gafori, the leader of the new school of music that was flourishing at Milan. Gafori seems to have been often in Grolier's company. He dedicated to the treasurer his work on the harmony of musical instruments, as well as the *Apologia* in which he afterwards convicted the Bologna school of its errors. 'My work,' he says in his later book, 'is sound enough if soundly understood'; and he tells his rival that, though he may writhe with rage, the harmony of Gafori and the fame of Jean Grolier will live for ever. The introduction to his work upon harmony contains a few interesting details about Grolier's way of living at Milan. Gafori addresses his book in a dialogue, and vows that it shall never come home again if Grolier refuses to be the patron. A poetical friend adds a piece in which the Muses appear without their proper emblems, and even Apollo is bereft of his lyre. Gafori, they say, has taken away their harmonies and will not give them back. They are advised to make their way to the concert at Grolier's house, where the friend of the



Muses sits among the learned doctors. An illustration shows Gafori sitting at his organ and the musicians with their wind-instruments at the end of the lofty hall. Gafori himself, in another preface, declares that his musical offspring can hardly be kept at home; they used to be too shy to go out, though all the musicians were awaiting them; now that they have Grolier's patronage they are all as bold as brass, and ready to rush through any danger to salute their generous friend. The history of the copy presented to Grolier is not without interest. After the great musician's death the treasurer gave it to Albisse, one of the King's secretaries: Albisse in 1546 gave it to Rasse de Neux, a surgeon at Paris, who was devoted to curious books; in 1674 it entered the library of St. Germain-des-Prés, and was nearly destroyed more than a century afterwards in a great fire. During the Revolution it was added to the collection at the Convent des Célestins, and was afterwards deposited in the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, where we suppose that it still remains.

Grolier was fond of giving books to his friends. A commentary on the Psalms with his name and device, now in the National Library at Paris, bears an inscription showing that he had given it to a monk named Jacques Guyard. He presented a fine copy of Marcus Aurelius to his friend Eurialo Silvestri; and there are volumes bearing his name in conjunction with those of Maioli and Laurinus which indicate similar gifts. He is known to have presented several

volumes to the President de Thou as a mark of gratitude for assistance during his later troubles. It is somewhat singular that Jacques-Auguste de Thou never succeeded in getting possession of these books, though they had always been kept in his father's library; and they were not, indeed, replaced in the 'Bibliotheca Thuana' until it had become the property of the Cardinal de Rohan. It is interesting to learn that a volume of Cicero was given by Grolier to the artistic printer, Geoffroy Tory of Bourges, who designed the lettering of his mottoes: they were of an antique or 'Roman' shape, and were in two sizes, and proportioned, as we are told, 'in the same ratio to each other as the body and face of a man.' Geoffroy Tory mentioned them in a letter of the year 1523. 'It was on the morrow of the Epiphany,' says the light-hearted artist, 'that after my slumbers were over, and in consciousness of a joyous repast, I lay day-dreaming in bed, and twisting the wheels of my memory round: I thought of a thousand little fancies both grave and gay, and then there came before my mind those antique letters that I used to make for my lord, Master Jean Grolier, the King's councillor, and a friend of the *Belles Lettres* and of all men of learning, by whom he is loved and esteemed on both sides of the Alps.'

Another testimony comes from Dr. Sambucus, who knew Grolier well when he was living in Paris, and used to be fond of inspecting his cabinet of coins. In the last year of Grolier's life he received a book

on the subject with a dedication to himself by the worthy Doctor. Grolier was reminded in the preface of their long talks on antiquarian subjects, and of the kindness which Sambucus had received from the treasurer and the treasurer's father at Milan. 'During the last three years,' says Sambucus, 'I have been enriching my library, and I have added some very scarce coins to the cabinet that you used to admire.' He adds a few complaints about dealers and the tricks of the trade, which we need not repeat. 'And now farewell!' he ends, 'noble ornament of a noble race, by whose mouth nothing has ever been uttered that came not from the heart!'

Some account of Grolier's career is to be found in De Thou's great history. He praised the 'incredible love of learning' that had earned for a mere youth the intimate friendship of Budæus. He showed with what administrative ability the Milanese territories were governed, and with what dignity Grolier filled the high office of Treasurer at home.

Grolier, he says, built a magnificent mansion in the Rue de Bussy, which was known as the Hôtel de Lyon; in one of its halls he arranged the multitude of books 'so carefully, and with such a fine effect, that the library might have been compared to that which Pollio established in Rome'; and so great was the supply that, notwithstanding his many gifts to friends and various misfortunes which befell his collection, every important library in France was able after his death to show some of his grand bindings as its

principal ornament. Grolier's old age was disturbed by imputations against his official conduct, and it seemed at one time as if his fortune were in considerable danger. 'He was so confident in his innocence,' said the historian, 'that he would not seek help from his friends; but he might have fallen at last, if he had not been protected by my father the President, who always used his influence to help the weak against the strong and the scholar against the ignorance of the vulgar.' The old Treasurer kept his serene course of life until he reached his eighty-sixth year: he died at his Hôtel de Lyon, surrounded by his books, and was buried near the high altar in the Church of St. Germain-des-Prés.

Upon Grolier's death his property was divided among his daughters' families. Some of the books were certainly sold; but the greater part of the library became the property of Méric de Vic, the old Treasurer's son-in-law. Méric was keeper of the seals to Louis XIII. His son Dominique became Archbishop of Auch. They were both fond of books, and took great care of Grolier's three thousand exquisite volumes, of which they were successively the owners. They lived in a large house in the Rue St. Martin, which had been built by Budæus, and here the books were kept until the great dispersion in the year 1676. 'They looked,' said Bonaventure d'Argonne, 'as if the Muses had taken the outsides into their charge, as well as the contents, they were adorned with such art and *esprit*, and looked so gay,

with a delicate gilding quite unknown to the bookbinders of our time.' The same visitor described the sale of 1676. All Paris was to be seen at the Hôtel de Vic. 'Such a glorious collection ought all to have been kept together; but, as it was, everybody got some share of the spoil.' He bought some of the best specimens himself; and as he was only a poor monk of the Chartreuse the prices can hardly have run high. M. Le Roux de Lincy has traced the fate of the volumes dispersed at the sale. We hear, he says, of examples belonging to De Mesmes and Bigot, to Colbert and Lamoignon, Captain du Fay, the Count d'Hoyrn, and the Prince de Soubise. Some of the finest were purchased by Baron Hohen-dorf and were transferred about the year 1720 to the Imperial Library at Vienna. Yet they never rose to any high price until the Soubise sale towards the end of the last century, when the weight of the English competition for books began to be felt upon the Continent.

M. de Lincy has traced the adventures of more than three hundred volumes, once in Grolier's ownership, but now for the most part in public libraries. The earlier possessors are classified according to the dates of their purchases. Of those who obtained specimens soon after the old Treasurer's death we may notice especially Paul Pétau the antiquarian, De Thou the historian, and Pithou the statesman and jurist. Perhaps we should add Jean Ballesdens, a collector of fine books and MSS., whose library at his death in

1677 contained nine of Grolier's books, and Pierre Séguier, to whom Ballesdens acted as secretary; and as Séguier was the personal friend of Grolier, he may have been the original recipient of some of the volumes in question.

Pierre Séguier founded a library which became one of the sights of Paris. His grandson, Charles Séguier, the faithful follower of Richelieu, was celebrated for his devotion to books. He used to laugh at his own bibliomania. 'If you want to corrupt me' he would say, 'you can always do it by giving me a book.' His house in the Rue Bouloi served as headquarters for the French Academy before it gained a footing in the Louvre; and on Queen Christina's visit in 1646 one of her first literary excitements was to visit Chancellor Séguier's *salon*. The decorations were considered worthy of being engraved and published by Dorigny. The gallery stood between two large gardens. The ceilings were encrusted with mosaics on a gold ground with allegorical designs by Vouet. The upper story contained about 12,000 books, and as many more were ranged in the adjoining rooms, one large hall being devoted to diplomatic papers, Greek books from Mount Athos, and Oriental MSS. According to a description published in 1684 a large collection of porcelain was arranged on the walls above the book-cases and in cases set cross-wise on the floor: 'the china covered the whole cornice, with the prettiest effect in the world.' We are reminded of the lady's book-room which Addison described as

something between a grotto and a library. Her books were arranged in a beautiful order ; the quartos were fenced off by a pile of bottles that rose in a delightful pyramid ; the octavos were bounded by tea-dishes of all shapes and sizes ; 'and at the end of the folios were great jars of china placed one above the other in a very noble piece of architecture.'

Among the purchasers at the later sale we may notice the witty Esprit Fléchier, who bought several of the lighter Latin poets, being a fashionable versifier himself and a dilettante in matters of binding and typography. In his account of the High Commission in Auvergne, appointed to examine into charges of feudal tyranny, the Abbé tells us how his reputation as a bibliophile was spread by a certain Père Raphael at all the watering-places, and how two learned ladies came to inspect his books and carried off his favourite Ovid. His library was removed to London and sold in the year 1725 ; and the occasion was of some importance as marking the beginning of the English demand for specimens from Grolier's library.

Archbishop Le Tellier bought fifteen good examples, which he bequeathed in 1709, with all his other books, to the Abbey of St. Geneviève. His whole collection included about 50,000 volumes, mostly dealing with history and the writings of the Fathers. 'I have loved books from my boyhood,' he said, 'and the taste has grown with age.' He bought most of his collection during his travels in Italy, in England, and in Holland ; but perhaps the



best part of his store came from his tutor Antoine Faure, who left a thousand volumes to the Archbishop, to be selected at the legatee's discretion.

The most valuable portion of Grolier's library was bought by his friend Henri de Mesmes. This included the long series of presentation copies, printed on vellum, and magnificently bound. De Mesmes was a collector with a love of curiosities of all kinds. He seems to have been equally fond of his early specimens of printing, his Flemish and Italian illuminations, and the Arabic and Armenian treatises procured by his agents in the East. His library became a valuable museum which was praised by all the writers of that age, except indeed by François Pithou, who called De Mesmes a literary grave-digger, and mourned over the burial of so many good books in those cold and gloomy sepulchres.

There seems to have been little occasion for this outburst, since the library was open to all who could make a good use of it during the life of Henri de Mesmes and under his son and grandson. Henri de Mesmes the younger, its owner in the third generation, was renowned for his zeal in collecting; he is said to have even procured MSS. from the Court of the Great Mogul, dispatched by a French goldsmith at Delhi, who packed them in red cotton and stuffed them into the hollow of a bamboo for safer carriage. One of the finest things in his whole library was the Psalter which Louis IX. had given to Guillaume de Mesmes: it had come by some means into

the library at Whitehall; but on the execution of Charles I. the French Ambassador had been able to secure it, and had restored it to the family of the original donee.

The Norman family of Bigot rivalled the race of De Mesmes in their ardour for book-collecting. Jean Bigot in 1649 had a magnificent library of 6000 volumes, partly inherited from his ancestors, and partly collected out of the monastic libraries at Fécamp and Mont St. Michel and other places in that neighbourhood. His son Louis-Emeric took the library as his share of the inheritance: its improvement became the occupation of his life; he made many expeditions after books in foreign countries, but when he was at home his library was the general *rendez-vous* of all who were interested in literature. The books were left to Robert Bigot upon trusts that were intended to prevent their dispersion. A sale, however, took place in 1706, at which the monastic archives and most of the MSS. were purchased by the government.

By some arrangement, of which the history is unknown, the head of the family of De Mesmes was persuaded to allow his books to be included in the Bigot sale. There seems to have been an attempt to disguise the transaction by tearing off the bindings and defacing the coats of arms. The strangest thing about the sale was the fact that no notice was taken of its containing the finest portion of Grolier's library. The splendid *Aldines*, on vellum, fell into the hands

of an ignorant notary with a new room to furnish : and he thought fit to strip off all the bindings, that had been a marvel of Italian art, and to replace them with the gaudy coverings that were more suited to his *bourgeois* desires.

M. de Lincy remarks that Grolier's books were strangely neglected through a great part of the eighteenth century. At the very end of the period, Count Macarthy had the good taste to include a few of them in his collection of books upon vellum. Mr. Cracherode began, in 1793, to buy all the specimens that came into the market : and the library which he bequeathed to the British Museum contains no less than eighteen fine examples. Eight more were comprised in the magnificent bequest of Mr. Thomas Grenville's library in 1846. There has been a demand for these books in England for more than a century and a half. But when we look at the catalogues of Gaignat or La Vallière they seem to have been altogether disregarded. When Gaignat died in 1768 his collection was regarded as perfect ; it was said that ' no one in the commonwealth of letters had ever brought together such a rich and admirable assembly.' Yet he only had one ' Grolier book,' a magnificent copy of Paolo Giovio's book on Roman Fishes, which passed to the Duc de la Vallière, and went for a few *livres* at his sale. There were only two other specimens in the Duke's library ; and they seem to have been treated with equal indifference. M. de Lincy was of opinion that the memory of Grolier was

almost entirely forgotten, except in his native city of Lyons. The appearance of his books might be admired by an antiquary here and there; but the classics had gone out of fashion for a time, and the world gave its attention to old poetry, to mediæval romance, and even to 'books of *facetiæ*.'

Grolier's reputation had mainly depended on his generous patronage of literature. Even the House of Aldus had rejoiced to be the clients of a new Mæcenæ. The authors of that time were still too weak to go alone. In the absence of a demand for books it was essential to gain the favour of a great man who might open a way to fame and would at least provide a pension. We have all smiled at the adulations of an ancient preface and the arrogance which too often balked the poor writer's hopes. D'Israeli reminds us that one of the Popes repaid the translation of a Greek treatise with a few pence that might just have paid for the binding, and of Cardinal Este receiving Ariosto's work with the question—'Where on earth all that rubbish had been collected?' This was but a temporary phase, and literature became free from the burden as soon as the public had learned to read. The Houses of Plantin and the Elzevirs required no help in selling out their cheap editions. A good dedication was still a feather in the patron's cap. Queen Christina considered that she was justly entitled to the patronage of her subjects' works: and Marshal Rantzau, when writers were scarce in Denmark, brought out an anonymous work for the

purpose of introducing a preface in which his fame as a book-collector was glorified. But the patron's function was gradually restricted ; and at last it was nearly confined to cases where a dedication repaid assistance given in producing an unsaleable book.

The later renown of Grolier must rest on the fact that he invented a new taste. It would have been nothing to buy a few thousand Aldine books, even if the collection included all the first editions, the papers of all sizes, the copies with uncut edges, and specimens of the true misprints. The family of Aldus had a large library of this kind, which was dispersed at Rome by its inheritor in the third generation ; but it never attracted much attention, and was generally believed to have been merged in a collection at Pisa. Grolier introduced a fashion depending for its success on a multiplicity of details. He bought books out of large editions just issuing from the press ; but he chose out the specimen with the best printing, and the finest paper, if vellum were not forthcoming. The condition was perfect. Like the Count Macarthy he would have no dust or worm-holes : he was as microscopic in his views as the most accurate Parisian bibliophile. The binding was in the best Italian style : a general sobriety was relieved by the brilliancy of certain effects, by the purity of the design, perhaps above all by the perfection of the materials. The book was an object of interest, for its contents, or for historical or personal reasons ; but it had also become an *objet d'art*, like a gem or a figure in porcelain. Grolier

preserved his dignity as a bibliophile, and his true followers have not degenerated into collectors of *bric-à-brac*. It is sufficient to name such men as M. Renouard, the owner of many of Grolier's treasures, or M. Firmin-Didot 'the friend of all good books,' or the collections of Mr. Beckford and Baron Seillière which have been in our own time dispersed. No doubt there is a tendency, especially among French amateurs, to regard books as mere curiosities; and M. Uzanne has drawn an amusing picture of the book-hunter as a chrysalis in his library, destined to find his wings in a flight after mosaic bindings, autographs, original water-colours, or plates in early states.

It is possible, however, to prevent the 'book-buying disease' from developing into a general collector's mania. With the world full of books, we must adopt some special variety for our admiration. One person will choose his library companions for their stateliness and splendid raiment, another for their flavour of antiquity, or the fine company that they kept in old times. Montaigne loved his friends on the shelf, because they always received him kindly and 'blunted the point of his grief.' He turned the volumes over in his round tower within any method or design; 'at one while,' he says, 'I meditate, at another time I make notes, or dictate, as I walk up and down, such whimsies as meet you here.' He cared little about the look of their outsides, but thought a great deal about their readiness to divert him; 'it is the best

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*viaticum* I have yet found out for this human pilgrimage, and I pity any man of understanding who is not provided with it.' We have omitted the best reason of all. One who has lived among his books will love them because they are his own. Marie Bashkirtseff expressed the matter well enough in a page of her journal:—'I have a real passion for my books, I arrange them, I count them, I gaze upon them: my heart rejoices in nothing but this heap of old books, and I like to stand off a little and look at them as if they were a picture.'



## CHAPTER XIII.

### LATER COLLECTORS: FRANCE—ITALY—SPAIN.

WE have still to notice one or two of Grolier's contemporaries, who may be classed as great book-collectors of an old-fashioned type. They knew the whole history of 'the Book,' and were themselves the owners of exquisite treasures, which are now hoarded up as the choicest remains of antiquity. But their function was not so much to collect books as rare and curious objects as to undertake the duty of saving the records of past history from destruction. They did the work in their day which has now devolved upon the guardians of public and national libraries. No private person could now take their place; but the interests of literature could hardly have been protected in a former age without the personal labour and enthusiasm of Orsini and Pétau.

Fulvio Orsini was born in 1529. He began life as a beggar, though for many years before his death he was the leader of Italian learning. A poor girl had been abandoned with her child and was forced to beg her bread in the streets of Rome. The boy obtained a place in the Lateran when he was only seven years old: the Canon Delfini recognised his precocious talents and undertook to find him a classical educa-

tion. The student obtained some small preferment, and succeeded to his patron's appointment. His marvellous acquaintance with ancient books secured him a place as librarian to the Cardinal Farnese, and he received many offers of more lucrative employment: but he found that if he accepted he would have to live away from Rome; and he refused everything that could cause inconvenience to his mother, whose comfort was his constant care. On his death, in the year 1600, he bequeathed his vast collections to the Vatican, and the gift can only be compared to such important events as the arrival of the spoils of Urbino, or the great purchase of MSS. from the Queen of Sweden.

Orsini has been ridiculed for having more books than he could read, and for an excessive devotion to the antique. 'Here is a library like an arsenal,' said the satirist, 'stored with all the requisites for any campaign. The owner buys all the books that come in his way: it is true that he will not read them; but he will have them magnificently bound, and ranged on the shelves with a mighty show, and there he will salute them several times a day, and will bring his friends and servants to make their acquaintance.' Orsini is rebuked for his admiration of a dusty manuscript. 'When one of these old parchments falls into his hands, he makes you examine the decayed leaves on which the eye can hardly trace any marks of an ancient pen. 'What is this treasure that we have here?' he cries, 'and oh! what joy, here

we have the delight of mankind, and the world's desire, and pleasures not to be matched in Paradise!' 'There,' says our satirist, 'you have the very portrait of Fulvio Orsini. Why, he once took a manuscript *Terence*, full of holes and mistakes, in writing to Cardinal Toletus, and told him that it was worth all the gold in the world'; and, to convince his Spanish Eminence, he said that the book was a thousand years' old. '*Est-il possible?*' replies the Cardinal, 'you don't say so. I can only say, my friend, I would rather have a book hot from the press than all the old parchments that the Sibyl had for sale.'

Jacques Bongars, the faithful councillor and ambassador of Henri Quatre, was the owner of a remarkable library, consisting to a great extent of State papers and historical documents, which Bongars had special facilities for collecting during his official visits to Germany. He had studied law at Bourges under the learned Cujacius, of whom it is recorded that when his name was mentioned in the German lecture-rooms, every one present took off his hat. Bongars has described his excitement at purchasing the great lawyer's library. 'My chief care has been to seek out the books belonging to Cujas. I expect that you will have a fine laugh when you think of all that crowd that goes to Court as if it were a fair, to do their business together, and to try to get money out of the King, while a regular courtier like myself rushes off to this lonely spot to spend his fortune on books and papers, all in disorder and half eaten by the book-

worms. You will be able to judge if I am an avaricious man. No trouble or expense is anything to me where books are concerned. Would to God that I were free, and had time to read them. I should not feel any envy then of M. de Rosny's wealth or the Persian's mountain of gold.' While residing at Strasburg he bought the manuscripts belonging to the Cathedral from some of the soldiers by whom the city was more than once pillaged during the wars of religion.

About the year 1603 Bongars arranged with Paul Pétau for the joint purchase of a large collection of manuscripts, which had belonged to the Abbey of St. Benoît-sur-Loire, and had been saved by the bailiff Pierre Daniel when the Abbey was plundered. The share of Bongars in this collection was transferred to Strasburg, and passed eventually with the rest of his books to the public library of the city of Berne.

Paul Pétau was a man of universal accomplishments. He was the rival of Scaliger in the science of chronology ; his doctrinal works are praised as 'a monument of useful labour' ; 'he solaced his leisure hours with Greek and Hebrew, as well as Latin verse,' and, according to Hallam's judgment, obtained in the last subject the general approbation of the critics. He formed a valuable museum of Greek, Roman, and Gaulish antiquities, with a cabinet of Frankish coins, to which Peiresc was a generous contributor. His library contained several books that had belonged to Grolier ; but it was chiefly remarkable for its MSS., of which several were published by

Sirmond and Du Chesne among other materials for the history of France. Many of them had been acquired from the collection of Greek and Hebrew books formed by Jean de Saint André, or out of the mass of chronicles, romances, and old French poems belonging to Claude Fauchet, and a large portion came, as we have seen, out of an ancient Benedictine Abbey. Paul Pétau's books of all kinds were left to his son Alexander. The printed books, comprising a number of finely illustrated works on archæology, were sold at the Hague in 1722; the sale included the old library inherited by Francis Mansard, and the MSS. relating to Roman antiquities that had been the property of Lipsius. A thousand splendid volumes on parchment, the pride of the elder Pétau, described by all who saw them in terms of glowing admiration, were sold in his son's lifetime to Queen Christina of Sweden. She had always intended to buy some great collection, and had thought among others of buying up those of Henri de Mesmes, of De Béthune, and the Cardinal Mazarin. She was delighted with her new acquisition, and carried it off to Rome, where she made a triumphal entry with her books amidst the popular rejoicings.

Something may be learned about the Italian collectors in the age that followed Grolier's death, from the story of the strange wanderings of the manuscripts of Leonardo da Vinci. Very little was known upon this subject until M. Arsène Houssaye found an account of what had happened among the papers

of the Barnabite Mazenta, who died in the year 1635. 'It was about fifty years ago,' says the memorandum, written shortly before the old monk's death, 'that thirteen volumes of Leonardo's papers, all written backwards in his own way, fell into my hands. I was then studying law at Pisa, and one of my companions in the class-room was Aldus Manutius, renowned as a book-collector. We received a visit from one of his relations called Lelio Gavardi; he had been tutor in the household of Francesco Melzi, who was the pupil and also the heir of Leonardo.' Melzi treasured up every line and scrap of the great man's works at his country-house in Vaprio; but his sons did not care for art, and left the papers lying about in a lumber-room, so that Gavardi was able to help himself as he pleased. He brought thirteen volumes, well-known in the history of literature, as far as Florence at first, and then to Aldus at Pisa. 'I cried shame on him,' said Mazenta, 'and as I was going to Milan I undertook to return them to the Melzi family. There I saw Doctor Horatio Melzi, who was quite astonished at my taking so much trouble, and gave me the books for myself, saying that he had plenty more of the same sort in his garrets at home.' When Mazenta became a monk the thirteen volumes passed to his brothers, who talked so much about the matter that there was a rush of amateurs to Vaprio, and the Doctor was overwhelmed with offers for the great man's books and drawings. 'One of these rascals,' said Mazenta,

' was the sculptor Pompeo Leoni, who used to make the bronzes for the Escorial, and he pretended that he would obtain an appointment for Melzi at Milan, if he would get back the thirteen volumes for King Philip's new library in Spain. Leoni got possession of most of the books and kept them in his own cabinet. One of the volumes was presented by Mazenta's brother to the Ambrosian Library and may still be seen there, in company with the huge *Codice Atlantico*, which Leoni made up out of hundreds of separate fragments. At Leoni's death his collection was bought by Galeazzo Arcanati, the illustrious owner of an artistic and literary museum. He resisted the proposals of purchase that poured in from foreign Courts; our James I. is said to have offered three thousand gold doubloons for the great volume of designs; and on Arcanati's death the whole collection was transferred by his widow to the Ambrosiana. Some changes had been made in the distribution of the papers since Mazenta so easily acquired his thirteen books. The French took the same number away in 1796; but none of them ever returned, except the famous *Codice Atlantico*.

In Spain there were but few persons interested in books before the foundation of the Escorial towards the end of the sixteenth century. We learn from Mariana that soon after the year 1580 a vast gallery in the palace was filled with books, mostly Greek MSS., which had been assembled from all parts of Europe;



‘its stores,’ he said, ‘are more precious than gold : but it would be well if learned men had greater facilities for reading them ; for what profit is there from learning if she is treated like a captive and traitor ?’ Arias Montanus, the first Orientalist of his age, was appointed librarian by the founder ; he was the owner of an immense quantity of MSS. in Greek, Hebrew, and Arabic, many of which were used in his edition of the Antwerp Polyglott Bible, and these he bequeathed to the Escorial, while his printed books were left to the University of Seville.

The first book was printed in Valencia as early as the year 1474 ; but the prospects of literature remained dark until the termination of the Moorish wars. On the capture of Granada it was thought necessary to obliterate the memory of the Koran, and scores of thousands of volumes, or a million as some say, were destroyed by Cardinal Ximenes in a celebrated *auto-da-fé*. About three hundred Arabic works on medicine were preserved for the new library which the Cardinal was founding in his University of Alcalà. The Cardinal spent vast sums in gathering materials for his Mozarabic Missal and the great Complutensian Polyglott. It is said that to avoid future criticism he gave his Hebrew originals to be used in the making of fireworks, just as Polydore Vergil was accused in our country of burning the monastic chronicles out of which he composed his history, and as many Italian writers were believed to have destroyed their classical authorities. When

Petrarch lost his Cicero, it was thought that Alcionio might have stolen it for his treatise upon exile ; but we should probably be right in rejecting all these stories together as mere calumnies and 'forgeries of jealousy.'

Antonio Lebrixa, who worked under the Cardinal till his death in 1522, had done much to revive a knowledge of books, and may be regarded as the principal agent in the introduction of the new Italian learning. His pupil Ferdinand Nuñez, or Nonnius as he is often called, carried on the good work at Salamanca, and left his great library to the University. Diego Hurtado de Mendoza was one of the most distinguished students who ever followed the lectures there. As a poet he has been called the Spanish Sallust: as the author of the adventures of Lazarillo de Tormes he takes a high place among the lighter authors of romance ; and as a patron of learning he will always be remembered for having enriched the Escorial with his transcripts from Mount Athos, and six chests of valuable MSS. which he received in return for ransoming from his captivity at Venice the son of Soliman the Magnificent. Great credit must also be given to Don Ferdinand Columbus for his good work at Seville. The son of the great Admiral and Donna Beatrix Enriquez was one of the most celebrated bibliophiles in Europe. He began making his collections very soon after his father's death. Between 1510 and 1537 he had visited Italy several times, and had travelled besides in England and France, in the Low Countries and in

Germany, buying books wherever he went. His great object was to procure illuminated MSS. and early editions of romances and miracle-plays ; but he was also fond of the classics, and his library at Seville is still possessed of many copies of Latin poets and orators which are full of his marginal notes. At Louvain he became acquainted with Nicholas Clénard, who was lecturing there on Greek and Hebrew, and was just commencing the Arabic studies by which his name became famous. Don Ferdinand had a commission to bring back professors for the University of Salamanca, where learning was beginning to revive ; and Clénard was easily induced to visit a country which might contain the relics of Moorish culture. Ferrari, as we know, was very successful in the next generation in finding rare books in Spain for Borromeo's Ambrosian library. At Bruges, Don Ferdinand met Jean Vasée, a man just suited for an appointment as librarian, and he too was persuaded to accompany the traveller on his return. Don Ferdinand established a large library in his house at Seville. Clénard helped to arrange the books, and Vasée became librarian. The volumes amounted at least to fifteen thousand in number, though the exact amount remains unknown owing to discrepancies in the earliest catalogues.

Don Ferdinand hoped that the library would be kept up by the family of Columbus. With that object he left it to his great-nephew Don Luis, with an annuity to provide for the expenses ; if the

legacy were refused, it was to pass to the Chapter of the Cathedral at Seville, with alternative provisions in favour of the Monastery of San Pablo. As events turned out, the succession was not taken up on behalf of his young kinsman, and after some litigation the Fernandina, or 'La Colombina' as it was afterwards called, was adjudged to the Chapter of Seville and placed in a room by the Moorish Aisle at the Giralda. Owing chiefly to the generosity of Queen Isabella and the Duc de Montpensier the library of 'La Colombina' has been restored to prosperity, although according to Mr. Ford it was long abandoned to 'the canons and book-worms.' It appears that in the middle of the last century three-quarters of the MSS. had been destroyed by rough usage or by the water dripping in from the gutters; the books were in charge of the men who swept the Church, and they allowed the school-children to play with the illustrated volumes and to tear out the miniatures and woodcuts. Mr. Harrisse has described with much detail the grandeur and the decline of this celebrated institution, and he gives reasons for supposing that it may have suffered even in recent years from the negligence of its guardians. It is satisfactory, however, to find that its most precious contents have passed safely through every period of danger; the library still contains some of the books of Christopher Columbus, and especially the *Imago Mundi* with his marginal notes about the Portuguese discoveries, 'in all which things,' he writes 'I had my share.'



J. A. DE THOU.





## CHAPTER XIV.

DE THOU—PINELLI—PEIRESC.

IT was long a saying among the French that a man had never seen Paris who had not looked upon the books of Thuanus. The historian Jacques-Auguste de Thou held a leading place in literature, without pretending in any way to rival the greatness of Joseph Scaliger or the erudition of Isaac Casaubon. He was the master of a great store of personal and secret history collected in state papers and records; but he was also famous for the extent of his general scholarship, and for the patronage which he manifested towards all who laboured about books. He was himself a most fastidious collector. He never heard of the appearance of a valuable work without ordering three or four copies on the fine paper manufactured for his private use; and of any such book already issued he would order several sets of sheets to be taken to pieces in order to procure one perfect example. His library was not large. It consisted of about 8000 printed books and 1000 manuscripts, chiefly upon historical subjects; but they were all well selected, well bound, and in perfect condition. There is a letter upon this subject by Henri Estienne the printer, in which the high reputation of De Thou's



library is contrasted with Lucian's just invective against the illiterate book-hunter : 'The satirist would have honoured a man like you, so learned and so generous in your library : you choose your books with taste, and proportion the cost of binding to the price of the volume ; and Lucian, I am sure, would have praised your carefulness in these respects.'

In all matters connected with literature De Thou was helped by his friend 'Pithœus,' of whom it was said that no one knew any particular author as well as Pierre Pithou knew all the classics. By talent and hard work combined Pithou had 'distilled the quint-essence of wisdom' out of the garnered stores of antiquity. Upon his death De Thou was inclined to give up his books and the work that had made life pleasant. He wrote in that strain to his associate Isaac Casaubon. 'On the loss of my incomparable friend, the partner of my cares and my counsellor in letters and politics, the web that I was weaving fell from my hand, and I should not have resumed my history were it not a tribute to the memory of one who has done so much for me.'

De Thou's end was hastened by the death of his wife. Those who know the look of his books, stamped with a series of his family quarterings, will remember that he was first married to Marie Barbançon, and afterwards to Gasparde de la Chastre. 'I had always hoped and prayed,' he wrote at the commencement of his will, 'that my dearest Gaspara Chastræa would have outlived me.'

Admonished by her loss to set his affairs in order he began to take special pains in providing for the future of his books. He anticipated the public spirit of Cardinal Richelieu, to whom the merit is often assigned of having been the first to bequeath the use of his library to scholars. The Cardinal was not particular about the methods by which he amassed his literary wealth: he is said to have increased his store by all the arts of cajolery, and even by bare intimidation; and he may have wished to make some amends by directing that 'persons of erudition' should have access to his books after his death. De Thou had an equal love of books, and showed perhaps a kinder feeling about the use of the treasures which his own care had accumulated. 'It is important,' he wrote, 'for my own family and for the cause of learning that the library should be kept together which I have been for more than forty years collecting, and I hereby forbid any division, sale, or dispersion thereof; I bequeath it to such of my sons as shall apply themselves to literature, and they shall hold it in common, but so that it shall be free to all scholars at home or abroad. I leave its custody to Pierre du Puy until my sons are grown up, and he shall have authority to lend out the MSS. under proper security for their safe return.'

Pierre and Jacques du Puy, the 'two Puteani' as they were often called, were the sons of a distinguished bibliophile, Charles du Puy, who died in 1594, and were themselves the leaders in a curious department

of book-learning. Their father was the founder of a library enriched by his care with the best specimens of early printing and a few rare MSS. In the latter class he possessed an ancient bilingual copy of St. Paul's Epistles, a Livy in uncial characters, and the precious fragments of the Vatican Virgil, which he gave to Fulvio Orsini in his lifetime. 'On his death,' says M. Guigard, 'the bibliographical succession passed to Pierre and Jacques, his younger sons, the first a Councillor of State, the other Prior of St. Sauveur-les-Bray, and both employed as guardians of the books in the Royal Library. No two men were ever more ardently devoted to the interests of learning. They worked in concert at increasing and improving their father's library; but their chief object was to accumulate and preserve the obscurer materials of history. The *Collection Du Puy*, which has now become national property, comprised more than 800 volumes of fugitive pieces, memoirs, instructions, pedigrees, letters, and all the other miscellaneous documents that were classed by D'Israeli 'under the vague title of State Papers.' It has been said that the object of their 'Titanic labour' was to ease the way for the historian De Thou; but it is more likely that the brothers obeyed an instinct for the acquisition of secret history; 'life would have been too short to have decided on the intrinsic value of the manuscripts flowing down in a stream to the collectors.' The surviving brother bequeathed these State Papers to the Abbé de Thou

(the fourth possessor of the 'Bibliotheca Thuana') who sold them to Charron de Ménars; they were eventually purchased by Louis XVI., and were deposited in the Royal Library, where the printed books and certain other MSS. had been already received under a legacy from Jacques du Puy.

When the historian died the brothers jointly undertook the trust that had fallen to Pierre. 'Among all the French scholars,' said Gassendi, 'these two Puteani do most excel; and now, abiding with the sons of Thuanus, they sustain by all the means in their power the library and the students that have been committed to their care. François-Auguste de Thou, the historian's eldest son, became Grand-Master of the King's books; he added considerably to the 'Bibliotheca Thuana,' and his house became the meeting-place of the Parisian *savants*. A brilliant career was cruelly cut short by the malignity of Richelieu.

The young Cinq-Mars was in a plot with the Queen and Gaston of Orléans to overthrow the Cardinal's power. His friend De Thou was aware of the design, but had taken no part in the conspiracy. The Cardinal arrested them both, and dragged them along the Rhone in a boat attached to his own barge; and De Thou was executed as a scapegoat, while most of the leaders saved their lives. The Cardinal died soon afterwards, without having confiscated the library; and it passed to Jacques-Auguste, the historian's younger son, who by a tardy act of grace had been

restored to the civil rights enjoyed by his brother before his unjust conviction. He was by all accounts as great a book-collector as his father; and he had the good fortune to marry an heiress, Marie Picardet, who brought with her a large quantity of books from her father's house in Brittany. In the year 1677 the 'Bibliotheca Thuana' with all its additions passed to the Abbé Jacques-Auguste de Thou, who was soon afterwards compelled to part with it to the Président Charron de Ménars. St. Simon praised its new owner as a most worthy and honourable nonentity; but he had the sense to step into the breach and to save the 'Thuana' from destruction. When he sold the library to the Cardinal de Rohan, in 1706, he reserved the *Collection Du Puy* for his daughters. It is believed that the Cardinal, through the cleverness of his secretary Oliva, obtained the historian's choice examples for less than the price of the binding. We must follow the career of the collection to its melancholy end. The Cardinal left it to his nephew the Prince de Soubise. The world knows him as the inventor of a sauce and as the general in one lost battle; but he had a higher fame among the book-sellers for his prowess in the auction-room. He seems to have been the victim of a frenzy for books. He impressed them by crowds, and marshalled them in regiments and myriads. They all fell in 1789 before the hammer of the auctioneer. Dibdin has described the catalogue. It was unostentatious and printed on indifferent material. He hoped, with his curious in-

sistance on the point, that there were 'some few copies on large paper.' It is a mark of the changes in book-collecting that Dibdin praised the index as excellent, 'enabling us to discover any work of which we may be in want'; but it is now regarded as remarkable for its poverty, and especially for the extraordinary carelessness that left eight noble specimens from Grolier's library without the slightest mark of distinction.

Gian-Vincenzio Pinelli was a celebrated man of letters whose library at Padua formed 'a perpetual Academy' for all the scholars of his day. Born at Naples in 1538, he spent the greater part of his long life at Padua, where he was sent to study the law; but the only sign of his professional labours appears to have been that he rigidly excluded all works on jurisprudence from his magnificent library. His books, says Hallam, were collected by the labours of many years: 'the catalogues of the Frankfort fairs and those of the principal booksellers in Italy were diligently perused, nor did any work of value appear from the press on either side of the Alps which he did not instantly add to his shelves.' Remembering the traditions of the age of Poggio, when the rarest classics might be found perishing in a garret or a cellar, Pinelli was always in the habit of visiting the dealers in old parchment and the brokers who carried off deeds and papers from sales, just as Dr. Rawlinson collected and gave to the Bodleian a mass of unsorted documents, including, as we have seen, even the logs of recent voyages, and the pickings of "grocers'

waste-paper." In each case the industry of the collector was constantly rewarded by the discovery of valuable literary materials, which would have been lost under ordinary circumstances. The library of Pinelli was augmented by that of his friend Paul Aicardo, the two *literati* having entered into an undertaking that the survivor should possess the whole fruit of their labours. On Pinelli's death, in 1601, his family determined to transfer his books to Naples. The Venetian government interfered on the ground that, though Pinelli had been allowed to copy the archives and registers of the State, it had never been intended that the information should be communicated to a foreign power. Their magistrate seized a hundred bales of books, of which fourteen were packed with MSS. On examination it appeared that there were about three hundred volumes of political commentaries, dealing with the affairs of all the Italian States; and it was arranged, by way of compromise, that these should remain at Padua in a repository under the charge of an official guardian. The rest of the library was despatched in three shiploads from Genoa. One vessel was captured by pirates, and the cargo was thrown overboard, only a few volumes being afterwards cast ashore. The other ships arrived safely at Naples; but it appears that the new proprietors had little taste for literature. The whole remaining stock was found some years afterwards in a mouldy garret, packed in ninety bales; and it was purchased at last for 3000



crowns by Cardinal Frederic Borromeo, who used it as the basis for the Ambrosian Library which he was at that time establishing in Milan. Another library was afterwards founded at Venice by members of the Pinelli family engaged in the Levantine trade. On the death of its last possessor, Maffeo Pinelli, in 1787, the collection was sold to a firm of English booksellers. It seems by Dibdin's account to have been in a poor condition, though Dr. Harwood declared that, 'there being no dust in Venice,' it had reposed for some centuries in excellent preservation. This immense body of books was re-sold in London two years afterwards at prices which barely covered the expenses incurred, though a large amount was obtained for a copy of the Polyglott Bible of Ximenes in six folio volumes printed upon vellum.

The praises of the great Pinelli were spread abroad by Scaliger, De Thou, and Casaubon ; but his memory, perhaps, has been best preserved by the ardent friendship of Peiresc. He was visited at Padua by the young philosopher in whose mind he found a reflection of his own ; and it was generally agreed that the lamp of learning had passed into safe hands when it was yielded by Pinelli to the student from Provence. Nicolas Fabry de Peiresc belonged to an ancient family established near Aix. His father had been selected by Louise XII. to share the education of the Princess Renée. A man of learning himself, he spared no expense in the boy's instruction, who became celebrated even in his childhood for the

strength of his precocious intellect. The most eminent professors in Italy combined to exalt 'the ripe excellence of his unripe years'; and when Pinelli died it was said that Peiresc had taken the helm of knowledge and was guiding the ship as he pleased. He explored at leisure the riches of Florence and Rome, and afterwards watched the rise of the 'Ambrosiana' at Milan. A letter from Joseph Scaliger, who ruled literary Europe like a King, from his chair at Leyden, sent Peiresc off to Verona, where he hunted up evidence in support of the wild story that the Scaligers were the representatives of the Ducal line of La Scala.

Julius Cæsar Scaliger, the father of the great philologist, had amused the world by claiming to be the son of Benedetto and Berenice della Scala, to have been a page of the Emperor Maximilian, and to have fought in the Battle of Ravenna; and he pretended that he had become a Cordelier, so as to rise to the Papal throne and expel the Venetians from his dominions. Peiresc was by no means a believer in this extraordinary romance; but he did his best to collect the coins, epitaphs, and pedigrees, which might please his learned correspondent. Crossing the Alps, we are told, 'he viewed the Lake of Geneva and made a tour through a multitude of books'; and returned to Aix with a library and cabinet of gems, 'thinking to himself that he would never see such plenty again.' When he visited Paris in 1605, his first object, he said, was to see the illustrious De

Thou, to thank him for his kind letters, and to enquire for messages from Scaliger. 'I cannot express,' he repeats, 'how joyfully he entertained me.' De Thou took down his books for the visitor, and showed him the records under lock and key that contained the secrets of his history, 'opening his very heart, and brimful of a wonderful sincerity.' Next day Casaubon came in from the *Bibliothèque du Roi*, and showed much pleasure at being introduced to the traveller. His letters of a later date show his high esteem for Peiresc. 'I am eagerly waiting to hear what Scaliger will say about the antiques, but I foresee that you will have room to glean after his harvest.' On another occasion he wrote: 'I do not know if you heard that the Duke of Urbino has sent me the Polybius, but I am indeed most beholden to you for the kindness.'

Ten years afterwards Peiresc came to Paris again, wishing to explore the Oriental treasures in the library of De Mesmes, and to visit the huge collections in the houses of St. Victor and St. Germain. Here he gained the friendship of Pierre Séguier and the elegant Nicolas Rigault, and of Jérôme Bignon, the first of a long dynasty of librarians. In England he saw the Bodleian, and talked with Savile, and admired Sir Robert Cotton as 'an honestly curious sort of man.' In Holland his chief business was to visit Scaliger, and we are told that he was careful not to ask about the treatise on squaring the circle, or to hint any doubt as to the truth of the Verona

romance. Here at Leyden he read in the great library, soon to be endowed with Scaliger's books, and saw the room of which Heinsius so nobly said: 'In the very bosom of Eternity among all these illustrious souls I take my seat'; and at Louvain he could only lament the death of Justus Lipsius, whom he regarded as 'the light and the loadstar of wisdom.'

Gassendi has left us an account of the library collected by Peiresc. Besides his acquisitions in the East, of which we have spoken elsewhere, the books came in crowds from his agents in France and Germany, and his scribes in the Vatican and Escorial. 'When any library was to be sold by public outcry, he took care to buy the best books, especially if they were of some neat edition that he did not already possess.' He bound them in red morocco with his cypher or initials in gold. One binder always lived in the house, and sometimes several were employed at once, 'when the books came rolling in on every side.' He would even bind up bits of old volumes and worm-eaten leaves; good books, he said, were so badly used by the vulgar, that he would try to have them prized at least for their beauty, and so perhaps they might escape the hands of the tobacco-nist and the grocer. A treatise published by Jerome Alexander contained a wonderful description of the establishment. 'Your house and library,' says the dedication are a firmament wherein the stars of learning shine: the desks are lit with star-light and the

books are in constellations: and you sit like the sun in the midst, embracing and giving light to them all.' Peiresc was anxious to circulate the book, which contained a rare treatise by Hesychius; but he took care to compose another dedication, which was printed and inserted without comment.

Notwithstanding his profuse purchases he did not leave a large collection at his death. His friends complained that he lent 'a world of books' that were never returned, and that he was especially lavish of any works that could be replaced by purchase. 'About ten years after his death,' says his friend Lemontey, 'his relations brought his books to Paris, where I saw them in 1647; they formed a great company of volumes, most curiously bound. They ought to have been sold *en bloc*, but as the Genius of the library had fled, the Fates ordained that they should be torn asunder.' Most of the books were purchased for the Collège de Navarre. A great number of the MSS. were destroyed, though there are still a few volumes in the public library at Carpentras. These were purchased from Louis Thomassin, a member of Peiresc's family, by Don Malachi d'Inguibert, librarian to Pope Clement XII., who founded the collection of Carpentras when he became Bishop of the diocese. There is a tradition that Peiresc's correspondence, containing many thousands of documents, was destroyed by his grand-niece, 'a kind of female Omar,' who insisted in using the papers for lighting fires and making trays for her silk-worms.

Peiresc employed some of the most learned men of his time to collect for him in Italy. Jacques Gaffarel, who had been engaged in similar work for Richelieu, was his principal agent in Rome. At Padua he was so fortunate as to secure the services of the archæologist Tomasini. But his correspondence shows that the prince of librarians, Gabriel Naudé, was at once his agent, his adviser, and his friend ; and it is from Naudé that we take the words of grief which remain as the scholar's memorial. 'Oh cruel Fate and bitter Death, thrust into the midst of our jollity ! Was there ever a man, I pray you, more skilled in history and philology, more ready to assist the student, more endowed with wit and wealth and worth, the equipment of any man who, like Peiresc, is to hold the world of letters at his beck and call.'

## CHAPTER XV.

### FRENCH COLLECTORS—NAUDÉ TO RENOUARD.

GABRIEL NAUDÉ was a Doctor of Medicine, and held an appointment at one time as physician in ordinary to Louis XIII. But even as a student he manifested that passion for books which furnished the real occupation of his life. Before taking his degree at Padua he was librarian to Henri de Mesmes, and afterwards to Cardinal Bagni at Rome. On his patron's death he was placed in charge of the great library which Cardinal Barberini was establishing in his palace in the Piazza of the Quattro Fontane. Some part of his time was spent in collecting books for Cardinal Richelieu, who offered Naudé the charge of his library in 1642 ; but, the Cardinal having died in that year, Naudé transferred his services to Mazarin. He inspired his employer with the desire of emulating the magnificence of Barberini and the patriotic generosity of Borromeo ; and the librarian's keen scent for books and minute knowledge of their values were thenceforth utilised in the work of creating the *Bibliothèque Mazarine*.

Richelieu had done things on a grand scale. He had confiscated to his own use the whole town-library



at La Rochelle; and Naudé was anxious that Mazarin's great undertaking should begin with an acquisition *en bloc*. A provincial governor named Simeon Dubois had made a collection in the Limousin. His books had passed into the hands of Jean Descordes, a Canon of Limoges, who died in 1642 possessed of about 6000 volumes. Naudé prepared the catalogue, and persuaded the Cardinal to purchase the whole property by private contract. A few months afterwards the King gave him the State Papers collected by Antoine de Loménie. A great number of printed books were added under Naudé's superintendence, and in a short time the new library was opened to the public. Its regulations were framed in a very liberal spirit, as may be learned from the first of Naudé's rules: 'The library is to be open to all the world without the exception of any living soul; readers will be supplied with chairs and writing-materials, and the attendants will fetch all books required in any language or department of learning, and will change them as often as is necessary.'

In reviewing the condition of the other great libraries, Naudé pointed out that there was nothing like an unrestrained admission except at the Bodleian, the Ambrosian, and the Angelica Library at Rome. The public had no rights at the Vatican, or the Laurentian, or the Library of St. Mark at Venice. It was just the same at Bologna, or Naples, or in the Duchy of Urbino. The same thing, he said, might be seen in other countries. Ximenes built a fine

library at Alcalà, and there was a collection of the books of Nuñez at Salamanca; there were the Rantzaus at Copenhagen and the Fuggers at Augsburg; they had done everything for the use of scholars except making the libraries free. The French themselves had the King's Library, a vast accumulation at St. Victor's, and a rich bequest from De Thou; but the use of all this wealth of books was hampered by the most complicated restrictions. We can see that he was rejoicing in his own good work while he praised the stately Ambrosiana. 'Is it not astonishing,' he asks, 'that any one can go in when he likes, and stay as long as he cares to look about or to read or make extracts? All that he has to do is to sit at a desk and ask for any book that he wishes to study.'

For some years after the new library was established Naudé travelled in quest of books over the greater part of Europe. He said that he would have ransacked Spain if Mazarin had not preferred an invasion by the regular army. He was the 'familiar spirit' of the auction-room, and it became a by-word that a visit from the great book-hunter was as bad as a storm in the book-shops. He boasted in his epigrams of exploits in Flanders, in Switzerland, and among the Venetian book-stalls. At Rome he bought books by the fathom; he skimmed the German shelves, and passed over into England to relieve the islanders of their riches. At Lyons he met Marshal Villeroi, who gave him a great portion of the books which Cardinal

de Tournon had bequeathed to the Jesuits. We trace the result of his travels in his description of the libraries of Europe. Certain subjects, as he said, are in vogue at particular places, and we ought always to notice the book-fashions to show our respect for the feelings of mankind. 'For positive science we go to Rome or Florence or Naples, and for jurisprudence to Paris or Milan; France supplies us with history; and if we wanted scholastic lore we might go to Spain, or the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge.'

In 1647 the Mazarine Library contained about 45,000 volumes, and Naudé in his joy proclaimed it as the eighth wonder of the world. The Parisians appeared to be delighted with the superb Loménie MSS. and the crowd of bright volumes in the Cardinal's ordinary livery. But in 1651 the Parliament got the upper hand of the 'Red Tyrant' in one of the unmeaning struggles of the Wars of the Fronde; the property of Mazarin was confiscated for a time, and the library was put up for sale. The list of Commissioners included the respectable names of Alexandre Pétau and Pierre Pithou; yet we are assured that the auction resembled a massacre, and that hardly any obstacle was placed in the way of the most impudent thefts. Naudé in vain petitioned against a decree which had fallen like a thunder-bolt on the 'wonderful work of his life.' 'Why will you not save this daughter of mine, this library that is the fairest and best-endowed in the world? Can you permit the public to be deprived of such a precious and

useful treasure ? Can you endure that this fair flower, which spreads its perfume through the world, should wither as you hold it in your hands ?'

Naudé spent his own small fortune in ransoming the books on medicine. He had worked hard to persuade Queen Christina to purchase the whole collection ; but when it came to the point she only bought a few MSS. which were afterwards returned. The 'Pallas of the North,' was interested in Naudé's misfortunes. She invited him to take charge of the Royal Library at Stockholm, and here he rested for a while. He made acquaintance in Sweden with several celebrated men of letters ; Descartes was a guest at the Court, and used to be ready to begin his metaphysical discourses at day-break. Naudé on one occasion delighted the young Queen by stepping a Greek dance with Professor Meibomius, who was just at that time bringing out his work upon the music of the ancients. The climate, or the excitement of that vivacious Court, began to disagree with Naudé's health ; he resigned his appointment and returned to France, but died at Abbeville on his way to Paris, a few months before his patron's return to power. When the public library was established again the Cardinal purchased Naudé's private collection of 8000 books ; and care was taken to preserve them apart, as a mark of distinction, in a gallery named after the famous librarian.

The hereditary collections of Colbert and La Moignon were as much indebted to their librarians as

the Mazarine to the labours of Naudé. The Minister Jean-Baptiste Colbert was as celebrated for his books as for his finance : but the magnificence of the library was mainly due to its guardian Calcavi and his successor the venerable Baluze. Colbert's manuscripts are believed to have been the most valuable ever amassed by a person of private fortune. Among their eight thousand volumes were the choicest treasures from St. Martin's Abbey at Metz, including the *Book of Hours* used by Charles the Great, and a Bible said to have been illuminated for Charles the Bald. There were about 50,000 printed books, almost all well-bound ; and it was thought that the choicest Levantine moroccos had been secured for the Minister by an article in a treaty with the Sultan. Colbert died in 1683, and the library remained in his family for half a century afterwards. In 1728 the Marquis de Seignelaye sold the books, and began to sell a portion of the manuscripts ; the world was alarmed at the idea of a general dispersion ; the remaining manuscripts, however, were offered to Louis XV. ; and there was great rejoicing when he wrote '*Bon, 300,000 livres*' on the letter received from the Marquis.

The other famous library was amassed by 'an extraordinary family of book-collectors.' It was begun by Guillaume de la Moignon, who was President of the Parliament of Paris in 1658. His son Chrétien de la Moignon was as zealous a book-buyer as his father, and he secured the renown of their library by

engaging the services of Adrien Baillet. Dibdin quoted passages from Baillet's biography that show the tenderness with which the family treated his 'crazy body and nervous mind': 'Madame La Moignon and her son always took a pleasure in anticipating his wishes, soothing his irritabilities, promoting his views, and speaking loudly and constantly of the virtues of his head and heart.' Baillet in his turn gave to his employers the credit of his best literary work. 'It was done for you,' he wrote, 'and in your house, and by one who is ever yours to command.' The library was much enlarged by its owner in the third generation; and by its union with the collection of M. Berryer, who died in 1762, it became 'one of the most splendid in Europe.' It was dispersed during the troubles of the Revolution, and a great portion was brought to London in 1791; but the works on jurisprudence were reserved, and were sold in Paris a few years afterwards.

David Ancillon is perhaps best known as the defender of Luther and Calvin. But according to Bayle he was an indefatigable book-collector, and notable for having set the fashion of buying books in the first edition. Most people thought, said D'Israeli, that the first edition was only an imperfect essay, 'which the author proposes to finish after trying the sentiments of the literary world.' Bayle was on the side of Ancillon. There are cases, as he remarked, in which the second edition has never appeared; and at any rate the man who waits for the reprint shows

'that he loves a pistole better than knowledge.' Ancillon, however, always indulged himself with 'the most elegant edition,' whatever the first might have been; he considered that 'the less the eyes are fatigued in reading or work the more liberty the mind feels in judging of it.' It is easier to detect the merits in print than in manuscript: 'and so we see them more plainly in good paper and clear type than when the impression and paper are bad? Some have thought it better to have many editions of a good book: 'among other things,' says our critic, 'we feel great satisfaction in tracing the variations.' Ancillon was naturally accused of an indiscriminate mania for collecting; and he confessed that he was to some extent infected with the 'book-disease.' It was said that he never left his books day or night, except when he went to preach to his humble congregation. He was convinced that some golden thought might be found in the dullest work. Ancillon remained in France as long as his religion was tolerated. He found a home across the Rhine after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes; but from that time he had to be content with German editions, all his fine tall volumes having been destroyed by the 'Catholic' rioters at Metz.

If Evelyn can be believed, the art of book-collecting had come to a very poor pass in France about the seventeenth century. It had been discovered that certain classes of books were the necessary furniture of every gentleman's library. If a man of quality built a



mansion he would expect to find a book-room and a quantity of shelves ; it was a simple matter further on to order so many yards of folios or octavos, all in red morocco, with the coat of arms stamped in gold. Such collections, said La Bruyère, are like a picture-gallery with a strong smell of leather : the owner is most polite in showing off 'the gold leaves, Etruscan bindings, and fine editions' ; 'we thank him for his kindness, but care as little as himself to visit the tanyard which he calls his library.' We must not forget the financier Bretonvilliers, who about the year 1657 determined to become a bibliophile, and so far succeeded that some of his local books on Lorraine were purchased for the National Library. He first built a Hôtel, not far from the Cathedral of Notre-Dame, with a large gallery in which with infinite pains he built up a magnificent book-case ; the contents were of less importance ; but he succeeded after a time in filling it with books stamped with his new device of an eagle holding the olive-branch.

One or two of the more serious collectors may be noticed before we pass to the great age of Rothelin and La Vallière. Henri du Bouchet had gathered about eight thousand books, all very well chosen, according to the testimony of the Père Jacob ; on his death in 1654 he bequeathed them to the Abbey of St. Victor on public trusts so that those who came after him might find a solace in what had been 'his dearest delight.' He requested that they might be free to students for three days in the week and for

seven hours in the day ; and his wishes were duly regarded until the great library of St. Victor was dispersed in 1791. The monks set up a tablet and bust in memory of the generous donor ; and perceiving that the volumes were not emblazoned in the usual way they adopted the singular plan of inserting pieces of leather bearing his arms into holes cut in the ancient bindings.

The Abbé Boisot was another of the scholars who lived entirely for books. While quite a young man he acquired a considerable library in his travels through Spain and Italy ; and in 1664, during an official visit to Besançon, he was so fortunate as to acquire the MSS. of the Cardinal de Granvelle, who had been the confidential minister of the Emperor Charles v. Boisot wrote a delightful account of the adventures through which this collection had passed. 'At first,' he says, 'the servants used what they pleased, and then the neighbours' children helped themselves ; when some packing-cases were wanted, the butler, to show his economy, sold the records contained in them to a grocer.' At last they were all tired of these 'useless old papers,' and determined to throw them away. Jules Chifflet, according to Guigard, was the means of saving the remainder. He examined a number of the documents and recognised their importance, though they were mostly in cipher ; but he died before they could be sorted out. Boisot bought what he could from the heirs, and found a good many more MSS. in the neighbourhood.

They passed with the rest of Boisot's books to the Abbey of St. Vincent at Besançon ; and during the Revolution the whole collection became the property of the citizens and was transferred to the public library.

The hereditary treasures of the Bouhier family were dispersed in the same way through several provincial libraries. The collection had begun in the reign of Louis XII., and something had been done in each generation afterwards by way of adding fine books and manuscripts. Étienne Bouhier had collected in all parts of Italy. Jean Bouhier in 1642 bought the accumulations of Pontus de Thyard, the learned Bishop of Châlons. His father's own library had been dispersed among his children ; but Jean Bouhier succeeded in getting it together again, and added a large number of MSS. which he had gathered for the illustration of the history of Burgundy. The library became still more famous in the time of his grandson the President Jean Bouhier, who has been admired as the type of the true bibliophile. The bibliomaniac heaps up books from avarice or some animal instinct ; he is a collector, it is said, 'without intelligent curiosity.' Bouhier used to read his books and make notes upon them ; and it is said that he carried the practice to such excess as to deface with marginal scribblings the finest work of Henri Estienne and Antoine Vêrard. A visitor to his library described the sober magnificence of the rosewood shelves with silken hangings in which the rare editions and long

rows of manuscripts were ranged. In the next generation there was a startling change. The library had been left to Bouhier's son-in-law, Chartraire de Bourbonne: the grave offspring of Aldus and Gryphius found themselves in company with poets of the *talon rouge* and muses of the *Opéra bouffe*. When the gay De Bourbonne died, the ill-assorted crowd passed to his son-in-law in his turn, and was transferred in 1784 to the Abbey of Clairvaux.

We cannot name or classify the bibliophiles of the eighteenth century. It would be endless to describe them with the briefest of personal notes; how M. Barré loved out-of-the-way books and fugitive pieces, or Lambert de Thorigny a good history, or how Gabriel de Sartines, the policeman of the Parc aux Cerfs, had a marvellous collection about Paris. When Count Macarthy sold his books at Toulouse his catalogue contained a list of about ninety others, issued in the same century, from which his riches were derived. We can point to a few of the mightiest Nimrods. We see the serene Gaignat pass, and the bustling La Vallière; the Duc d'Estrées is recognised as a busy book-hunter, and there are the physicans Hyacinthe Baron and Falconnet whose keenness no prey could escape. We can distinguish the forms of the elegant '*bibliomanes*' to whom their books were as pictures or as jewels to be enclosed in a shrine; there is Count d'Hoym with a house full of treasures, and Boisset and Girardot de Préfond with their cabinets of marvels. If the crowds in the old-fashioned libraries

are like the multitude at Babel, these tall volumes in crushed morocco and 'triple gold bands' remind us of what our antiquaries have said of books glimmering in their wire cases 'like eastern beauties peering through their jealousies.' We ought to say something of M. de Chamillard, best known in his public capacity as a good match for the King at billiards and as the minister who proposed the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. In private life Michael de Chamillard was a virtuoso with well-filled galleries and portfolios; and he had assembled a large company of books of fashionable appearance. But our real interest is not so much with the Minister of Billiards, as M. Uzanne described him, but rather with his wife and three daughters, who were all true female bibliophiles. The eldest daughter, the Marquise de Dreux, was wife of the Grand Master of the Ceremonies; but though his collection was gay and polite the Marquise insisted on a separate establishment for the books that she had discovered and bought and bound. The Duchesse de la Feuillade and the Duchesse de Lorges insisted, like their elder sister, on having libraries for their separate use. The minister's wife was celebrated for the splendour of her books, and marvellous prices have been paid for specimens of her earlier style. But 'little Madame de Chamillard' attached herself in all things to the Maintenon, and followed the uncrowned queen in abandoning the paths of vanity; she gave up the world, so far as gilt arabesques and crushed morocco were concerned, and dressed all her

later acquisitions *à la Janséniste*, in plain leather with perhaps the thinnest line of blind-tooling for an ornament.

Charles du Fay was a captain in the Guards, compelled by his misfortunes to confine himself to the battles of the book-sale. He lost a leg at the bombardment of Brussels in 1695; and though he was promoted to a company in the Guards, it became at last apparent that he could not serve on horseback. Du Fay, we are told, was fortunately fond of literature; and he devoted himself with eagerness to the task of collecting a magnificent library. History and Latin poetry had always been his favourite subjects, and it appears that he was already collecting fine examples in this department during his campaigns in Germany and Flanders.

M. de Lincy commemorates the good taste that impelled Du Fay to buy several of Grolier's books, and records the industry with which he sought to remedy his defects of education. Professor Brochard, he says, was a learned man, with a good library of his own, who went to inspect the books gathered by Du Fay from all parts of Europe. The visitor expressed surprise that out of nearly four thousand volumes there should hardly be any in Greek. 'I have hardly retained a word of the language,' said Du Fay. 'Cato in his old age,' replied the Professor, 'did not hesitate for a moment to learn it; and a person quite ignorant of Greek can never know Latin well.' Du Fay was an easy good-



natured man, and at once followed his friend's advice, beginning from that day to buy Greek books and to work at the language so as to be able to read them. His object, however, in forming a library was not so much to gather useful information as to set up a museum of literary rarities. The idea is in accordance with our modern taste, and perhaps with the common sense of mankind ; but some of the old-fashioned collectors were angry with the poor epicure of learning. The Président Bouhier writes to Marais in 1725 on seeing a catalogue of the library : 'This savours more of bibliomania than scholarship.' Marais at once replied : 'Your judgment on Du Fay's catalogue is most excellent : it is not a library, but a shop full of curious book-specimens, made to sell and not to keep for one's self.'

Many of Du Fay's books were bought by Count d'Hoym, who lived for many years at Paris as ambassador from Augustus of Poland and Saxony. The Count has been accused of showing bad manners at Court, and of bad faith in giving the trade secrets of Dresden to the factory at Sèvres ; in bibliography at any rate, he was supreme among the amateurs, and his *White Eagle of Poland* appears upon no volume that is not among the best of its kind. He sat at one time at the feet of the Abbé de Rothelin ; but he soon became his master's equal in matters of taste, and was accepted until his exile at Nancy as the arbiter of elegance among the Parisians. M. Guigard quotes from the dedication of a 'treasury' of



French poetry a passage that indicates his high position: 'To the poets in this assemblage, whoever they be, it is a glory, Monseigneur, to enter your Excellency's library, so full, so magnificent, so well chosen, that it is justly accounted the prodigy of learning.'

Charles d'Orléans, Abbé de Rothelin, had died in 1744, when most of his books became the property of the nation. In some respects he was the most distinguished of the book-collectors. His learning and wealth enabled him to make a collection of theology that has never been surpassed; and he had the good fortune to acquire the vast series of State Papers and the priceless mediæval MSS. collected by Nicolas Foucault. His special taste was for immaculate editions in splendid bindings; but nothing escaped his notice that was in any way remarkable or interesting.

Paul Girardot de Préfond was a timber-merchant who fell into an apathetic state on retiring from active business. His physician, Hyacinthe Baron, was an eminent book-collector, and he advised the patient to take up the task of forming a library. So successful was the prescription that the merchant became renowned during the next half-century for his superb bindings, his specimens from Grolier's stores, and the Delphin and Variorum classics which he procured from the library of Gascq de la Lande. On two occasions the sale of his surplus treasures made an excitement for the literary world. Some

of his rarest books were sold in 1757, and twelve years afterwards his Delphin series and the greater part of his general collection were purchased by Count Macarthy.

Mérard de St. Just was another collector, whose exquisite taste is still gratefully remembered, though his small library has long been dispersed, and was indeed almost destroyed by a series of accidents before the outbreak of the great Revolution. 'My library,' he said, 'is very small, but it is too large for me to fill it with good books.' He would not have the first editions of the classics, because they were generally printed on bad paper which it was disagreeable to touch, with the exception of works produced by the Aldine Press. Nor would he buy mere curiosities, says Guigard, but left them to persons who cared for empty display, 'like one who proudly exhibits his patents of nobility without being able to point to any distinguished action of his ancestors.' He was the owner of many choice books that had belonged to Gaignat and Charron de Ménars, or had been bound for Madame de Pompadour, or to the undiscriminating Du Barry. In 1782, we are told, he despatched the best part of his library to America, but had the grief of learning soon afterwards that they had been captured at sea by the English. His philosophical temper was shown in his reply to the bad news: 'I have but one wish upon the subject; I hope that the person who gets this part of the booty will be able to comprehend the value of the treasure that has come to his hands.'

The elder Mirabeau was a collector of another type. The 'friend of mankind' intended to gather together the best and largest library in the world. He cared nothing for the scarcity or the external adornments of a volume; but he had a huge appetite for knowledge, and he longed to have the means of referring to all that could illustrate the progress of the race. He did not live to attain any marked success in his gigantic design; but his library had at least the distinction of containing all the books of the Comte de Buffon, enriched with marginal notes in the naturalist's handwriting.

A modest collection was formed a few years afterwards by Pierre-Louis Guinguen , who wrote a valuable work on the literary history of Italy. He is remembered as having published amid the terrors of 1791 an amusing essay on the authority of Rabelais 'in the matter of this present Revolution.' He led a peaceful life through all that troubled time, and succeeded in forming a very useful library containing about 3000 volumes; it was purchased for the British Museum on his death, and became the foundation of the great series of works on the French Revolution which has been brought together there.

The long life of M. Antoine Renouard bridges over the space between the days of Mirabeau and the time when the * l gants* of the Third Empire had invented a new bibliomania. Renouard had ordered bindings from the elder Derome; in 1785 he bought a book at La Valli re's sale. In his *Epictetus* there is the

following note: 'Bought in May 1785, the first book printed on vellum that entered my library; rather luxurious for a young fellow of seventeen, but then all my little savings were devoted to acquiring books; parties of pleasure, and elegancies of toilette, everything was sacrificed to my beloved books; and at that time a brisk and brilliant business permitted expenses which were followed by hard years of privation; it was in my first youth that I found it easiest to spend money on my books.' Renouard began life as a manufacturer. His father made gauze stuffs, and kept a shop in the Rue Apolline. In 1787 the Abbé le Blond, the librarian of the Collège Mazarin, heard that Molini had sold a fine Aldine Horace to a shopkeeper. 'The next day,' says Renouard, 'Le Blond came into my library. "Oh! I shall not have the book," he exclaimed, and when I looked round, he said, "I beg your pardon, I hoped to tempt you with a few *louis* for your bargain, but I have given up the idea at once, and I only ask the double favour of seeing the book and of being allowed to make your acquaintance."' Renouard was the historian of the House of Aldus, and naturally became the possessor of some of Grolier's finest books. During his career as a bookseller he parted with most of them; and at the sale of his library in 1854 the 'Lucretius,' the 'Virgil,' and the 'Erasmus,' were all that remained in his collection.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### LATER ENGLISH COLLECTORS.

IN describing the English collections of the eighteenth century we have the advantage of using the memoranda of William Oldys for the earlier part of the period. D'Israeli deplored the carelessness which led the 'literary antiquary' to entrust his discoveries and reminiscences to the fly-leaves of note-books, to 'parchment budgets,' and paper-bags of extracts. He expressed especial disappointment at the loss of the manuscript on London Libraries, with its anecdotes of book-collectors and remarks on book-sellers and the first publishers of catalogues. The book has come to light since his time, having been discovered among the important collections bequeathed by Dr. William Hunter to the University of Glasgow ; it was published by Mr. W. J. Thoms about the year 1862 in *Notes and Queries*, and was afterwards printed by him in a volume containing a diary and other 'choice notes' by Oldys and an interesting memoir of his life. 'In his own departments of learning,' says Mr. Thoms, 'Oldys exhausted all the ordinary sources of information,' and adds that 'his copious and characteristic accounts of men and books have endeared his memory to every lover of English literature.'

Oldys had some special advantages as a collector of old English poetry. He knew, as no one else at that time knew, the value of the plays and pamphlets that encumbered the stalls; he had no competitor to fear 'clad in the invulnerable mail of the purse.' Oldys was born in 1696; he became involved, while quite a young man, in the disaster of the South Sea Bubble; and in 1724 he was obliged to leave London for a residence of some years in Yorkshire. Among the books that he abandoned was the first of his annotated copies of *Langbaine*, which he found afterwards in the hands of a miserly fellow, begrudging him even a sight of the notes. 'When I returned,' he writes, 'I understood that my books had been dispersed; and afterwards, becoming acquainted with Mr. Thomas Coxeter, I found that he had bought my *Langbaine* of a bookseller who was a great collector of plays and poetical books.' His autobiography shows that he soon restored his literary losses. His patron, Lord Oxford, for whom he afterwards worked as librarian, was anxious to buy everything that was rare. 'The Earl,' says Oldys, 'invited me to show him my collections of manuscripts, historical and political, which had been the Earl of Clarendon's, my collections of Royal Letters and other papers of State, together with a very large collection of English heads in sculpture.' Mr. Thoms quotes a note from the *Langbaine* to show that Oldys had bought two hundred volumes 'at the auction of the Earl of Stamford's library at St. Paul's Coffee-house, where

formerly most of the celebrated libraries were sold.' It was while Oldys was living in Yorkshire, under the patronage of Lord Malton, that he saw the end of the library of State Papers collected by Richard Gascoyne the antiquary. The noble owner of the MSS. had been advised to destroy the papers by a lawyer, Mr. Samuel Buck of Rotherham, 'who could not read one of those records any more than his lordship'; but he feared that they might contain legal secrets or disclose flaws in a title or, as Oldys said, 'that something or other might be found out one time or other by somebody or other.' Richard Gascoyne, he adds, possessed a vast and most valuable collection of deeds, evidences, and ancient records, which after his death, about the time of the Restoration, came to the family of the first Earl of Strafford. They were kept in the stone tower at Wentworth Woodhouse until 1728, when Lord Malton 'burnt them all wilfully in one morning.' 'I saw the lamentable fire,' says Oldys, 'feed upon six or seven great chests full of the said deeds, some of them as old as the Conquest, and even the ignorant servants repining. . . . I did prevail to the preservation of some few old rolls and public grants and charters, a few extracts of escheats, and original letters of some eminent persons and pedigrees of others, but not the hundredth part of much better things that were destroyed.'

One or two extracts from the 'diary and choice notes' will show the minute attention given by Oldys



to everything concerned with books. Under the date of June 29th, 1737, we read: 'Saw Mr. Ames' old MSS. on vellum, entitled *Le Romant de la Rose*, which cost forty crowns at Paris when first written, as appears by the inscription at the end: it had been Bishop Burnet's book, his arms being pasted in it, and Mr. Rawlinson's, being mentioned in one of his catalogues; in the same catalogue also is mentioned Sir William Monson's collection, which Mr. West bought and lent me before the fatal fire happened at his chambers in the Temple.' Mr. Thoms adds that Sir William Monson, an Admiral of note in the reign of James I., formed considerable collections, principally about naval affairs. Under the date of August 8th, we read of a visit to Strype the historian. 'Invited by Dr. Harris to his brother's at Homerton, where old Mr. Strype is still alive, and has the remainder of his once rich collection of MSS., tracts, etc.' Dr. Knight's letter of a few months' earlier date was printed by Nichols in his *Literary Anecdotes*. 'I made a visit to old Father Strype when in town last: he is turned ninety, yet very brisk, and with only a decay of sight and memory. . . . He told me that he had great materials towards the life of the old Lord Burleigh and Mr. Foxe the martyrologist, which he wished he could have finished, but most of his papers are in "characters"; his grandson is learning to decipher them.' Under the dates of September 1st and 7th Oldys records that 'the Yelverton library is in the possession of the Earl of Sussex,

wherein are many volumes of Sir Francis Walsingham's papers'; and a few days later, 'Dr. Pepusch offered me any intelligence or assistance from his ancient collections of music, for a history of that art and its professors in England; and as to dramatic affairs, he notes that the Queen's set of Plays had at first been thought too dear; but after Mrs. Oldfield the actress died, and they were reported to be his collection, then the Queen would have them at any rate.' When Oldys died his curious library was purchased by Thomas Davies, and was put up to auction in 1762. The list of printed books comprises many literary treasures which in our days can hardly be procured, but at that time went for a song. 'The manuscripts were not so many as might be expected from so indefatigable a writer'; it seems that Oldys had always been too generous with his gifts and loans.

Among his notices of the London libraries we find an interesting account of the collection at Lambeth, then housed in the galleries above the cloisters. 'The oldest of the books were Dudley's, the Earl of Leicester, which from time to time have been augmented by several Archbishops of that See. It had a great loss in being deprived of Archbishop Sheldon's admirable collection of missals, breviaries, primers, etc., relating to the service of the Church, as also Archbishop Sancroft's.' The books and MSS. belonging to Sancroft had in part been deposited at Lambeth; but on his deprivation they were removed

to Emmanuel College at Cambridge. Oldys added that there was another apartment for MSS., 'not only those belonging to the See, but those of the Lord Carew, who had been Deputy of Ireland, many of them relating to the state and history of that kingdom.'

Archbishop Tenison had furnished another noble library near St. Martin's Lane 'with the best modern books in most faculties'; 'there any student might repair and make what researches he pleased'; and there too were deposited Sir James Ware's important Irish MSS. and many other portions of the Clarendon Collection, until offence was taken at their having been catalogued among the papers of the Archbishop.

In Dulwich College there was another library to which Mr. Cartwright the actor gave a collection of plays and many excellent pictures; and 'here comes in,' says Oldys, 'the Queen's purchase of plays, and those by Mr. Weever the dancing-master, Sir Charles Cotterell, Mr. Coxeter, Lady Pomfret, and Lady Mary Wortley Montague'; and here we might mention the sad case of Mr. Warburton the herald, whose forte was to find out valuable English plays. Shortly before his death in 1759 he discovered that the cook had used up about fifty of the MSS. for covering pies, and that among them were 'twelve unpublished pieces by Massinger.' Something may be said too as to the older collections formed in London for the use of schools. At Westminster, it has been well said,

Dean Williams 'enlarged the boundaries of learning.' According to Hackett, he converted a waste room into a noble library, modelling it 'into a decent shape,' and furnishing it with a vast number of learned volumes. The best of them came from the library of Mr. Baker of Highgate, who throughout a very long life had been gathering 'the best authors of all sciences in their best editions.' Dean Colet had endowed St. Paul's School with philological works in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin; but these were destroyed in the great fire, together with the whole library of the High Master. This was Mr. Samuel Cromleholme, who had the best set of neatly-bound classics in London; 'he was a great lover of his books, and their loss hastened the end of his life.' The shelves at Merchant Taylors and in the Mercers' Chapel were almost as well filled as those at St. Paul's; and Christ's Hospital at that time had a good plain library in the mathematical school, with globes and instruments, 'and ships with all their rigging for the instruction of lads designed for the sea.'

In the College of Physicians was a fine collection 'in their own and the other faculties.' Selden bequeathed to it his 'physical books,' and it was enriched by a gift of the whole library of Lord Dorchester, 'the pride and glory of the College.' We can only mention a few of the libraries described by Oldys. The Jews, he says, had a collection at Bevis Marks relating to the Talmud and Mischna and

their ceremonial worship: the French Protestants had another at the Savoy, and the Swedes another at their Church in Trinity Lane. The Baptists owned a great library in the Barbican. The Quakers had been for some years furnishing a library with all the works written by the Friends. John Whiting published the catalogue in 1708; 'and in my opinion,' says our critic, 'tis more accurately and perfectly drawn up than the Bodleian Library at Oxford is by Dr. Hyde, for the Quaker does not confound one man with another as the scholar does.' Francis Bugg, he adds, 'the scribbler against them,' had a better collection of their writings than any of the brethren; 'but I think I have read in some of his rhapsodies that he either gave or sold it to the library at Oxford.'

Charles Earl of Sunderland was the greatest collector of his time. He bought the whole library of Hadrian Beverland, 'which was very choice of its kind,' and a great number of Pétau's books as mentioned before; 'no bookseller,' it was said, 'hath so many editions of the same book as he, for he hath all, especially of the classics.' Shortly before his death in 1772 he commissioned Mr. Vaillant to buy largely at the sale of Mr. Freebairn's library. In Clarke's *Repertorium* we are told how a fine Virgil was secured: 'and it was noted that when Mr. Vaillant had bought the printed Virgil at £46 he huzza'd out aloud, and threw up his hat for joy that he had bought it so cheap.' The great collection was after-

wards taken to Blenheim, and has been dispersed in our time ; ' the King of Denmark proffered the heirs £30,000 for it, and "Queen Zara" would have inclined them to part with it.' When the Earl of Sunderland died, Humphrey Wanley saw a good chance for the Harleian. 'I believe some benefit may accrue to this library, even if his relations will part with none of the works ; I mean by his raising the price of books no higher now ; so that in probability this commodity may fall in the market, and any gentleman be permitted to buy an uncommon old book for less than forty or fifty pounds.' If we listen to the Rev. Thomas Baker, the ejected Fellow who gave 4000 books to St. John's at Cambridge, we shall hear a complaint against Wanley. Lord Oxford's librarian when he saw a fine book, even in a public institution, used to say, 'It will be better in my lord's library.' Baker might have said, 'a plague on both your houses !' What he wrote was as follows :—'I begin to complain of the men of quality who lay out so much for books, and give such prices that there is nothing to be had for poor scholars, whereof I have felt the effects ; when I bid a fair price for an old book, I am answered, "The quality will give twice as much," and so I have done.'

The Earls of Pembroke were for several generations the patrons of learning. 'Thomas, the eighth Earl, was contemporary with those illustrious characters, Sunderland, Harley, and Mead, during the Augustan age of Britain'; he added a large number of classics

and early printed books to the library at Wilton, and his successor Earl Henry still further improved it by adding the best works on architecture, on biographies, and books of numismatics ; 'the Earl of Pembroke is stored with antiquities relating to medals and lives.'

Lord Somers had the rare pieces in law and English history which have been published in a well-known series of tracts. Lord Carbury loved mystical divinity ; the Earl of Kent was all for pedigrees and visitations ; the Earl of Kinnoul made large collections in mathematics and civil law ; and Lord Coleraine followed Bishop Kennett in forming 'a library of lives.'

Richard Smith was remembered as having started in the pursuit of Caxtons in the days of Charles II. ; the taste was despised when Oldys wrote, but it eventually grew into a mania. 'For a person of an inferior rank we never had a collector more successful. No day passed over his head in which he did not visit Moorfields and Little Britain or St. Paul's Churchyard, and for many years together he suffered nothing to escape him that was rare and remarkable.'

Mr. John Bridges of Lincoln's Inn was another 'notorious book-collector.' When his books were sold in 1726 the prices ran so high that the world suspected a conspiracy on the part of the executors. Humphrey Wanley was disappointed in his commissions, and called it a roguish sale ; of the vendors he remarked 'their very looks, according to what I am told, dart out harping-irons.' Tom Hearne went to



Mr. Bridges' chambers to see the sale, and descanted upon the fine condition of the lots: 'I was told of a gentleman of All Souls that gave a commission of eight shillings for an Homer, but it went for six guineas; people are in love with good binding rather than good reading.' Some of the entries in the catalogue are of great interest. The first edition of Homer, printed at Florence in 1488 on large paper, went for about a quarter of the price of an Aldine Livy. Lord Oxford secured a 'Lucian' in uncial characters, and a splendid Missal illuminated for Henry VII. There was a large-paper 'Politian' in two volumes, very carelessly described as 'finely bound by Grolier and his friends'; but the best of all was the MS. Horace, with an exquisite portrait of the poet, 'from the library of Matthias Corvinus, King of Hungary.'

Dr. Mead was a collector of the same kind. All that was beautiful came naturally to this great man, of whom it was said that he lived 'in the full sunshine of human existence.' He was the owner of a very fine library, which he had 'picked up at Rome.' He had a great number of early-printed classics, which fetched high prices at his sale in 1754; his French books, according to Dibdin, and all his works upon the fine arts 'were of the first rarity and value,' and were sumptuously bound. His chief literary distinction rests on his edition of De Thou's 'History' in seven folio volumes. He had received a large legacy from a brother, and spent it in the publication of a

work 'from which nothing of exterior pomp and beauty should be wanting'; the ink and paper were procured from Holland; and Carte the historian was sent to France 'to rummage for MSS. of Thuanus.'

Oldys has a few notes upon curious collections which he thought might be diverting to a 'satirical genius.' A certain Templar, he says, had a good library of astrology, witchcraft, and magic. Mr Britton, the small-coal man, had an excellent set of chemical books, 'and a great parcel of music books, many of them pricked with his own hand.' The famous Dryden, and Mr. Congreve after him, had collected old ballads and penny story-books. The melancholy Burton, and Dr. Richard Rawlinson, and the learned Thomas Hearne, had all been as bad in their way. Mr. Secretary Pepys gave a great library to Magdalen College at Cambridge: but among the folios peeped out little black-letter ballads and 'penny merriments, penny witticisms, penny compliments, and penny godlinesses.' 'Mr. Robert Samber,' says Oldys, 'must need turn virtuoso too, and have his collection: which was of all the printed tobacco-papers he could anywhere light on.'

For 'curiosity or dotage' none could beat Mr. Thomas Rawlinson, whose vast collections were dispersed in seventeen or eighteen auctions before the final sale in 1733. Mr. Heber in the present century is a modern example of the same kind. 'A book is a book,' he said: and he bought all that came in his way, by cart-loads and ship-loads, and in whole libraries, on

which in some cases he never cast his eyes. The most zealous lovers of books have smiled at his duplicates, quadruplicates, and multiplied specimens of a single edition.

Thomas Rawlinson, for all his continual sales, blocked himself out of house and home by his purchases: his set of chambers at Gray's Inn was so completely filled with books that his bed had to be moved into the passage. Some thought that he was the 'Tom Folio' of Addison's caricature, in which it was assumed that the study of bibliography was only fit for a 'learned idiot.' Hearne defended his friend from the charge of pedantry, and declared that the mistake could only be made by a 'shallow buffoon.'

Rawlinson had a miserly craving after good books. If he had twenty copies of a work he would always open his purse for 'a different edition, a fairer copy, a larger paper.' His covetousness increased as the mass of his library was multiplied: and as he lived, said Oldys, so he died, among dust and cobwebs, 'in his bundles, piles, and bulwarks of paper.'

Upon Dr. Mead's death his place in the book-world was taken by Dr. Anthony Askew, who travelled far and wide in search of rare editions and large-paper copies. In describing the sale of his books in 1775 Dibdin almost lost himself in ecstasies over the magnificent folios, and the shining duodecimos 'printed on vellum and embossed with knobs of gold.' It has been said that with this sale commenced the new era in bibliography, during which such fabulous

prices were given for fine editions of the classics ; but the date should perhaps be carried back to Dr. Mead's time. Some credit for the new development should also be ascribed to Joseph Smith, who collected early-printed books and classics at Venice, while acting as English consul. His first library was purchased by George III. in 1762, and now forms the best part of the 'King's Library' at the British Museum. His later acquisitions were sold in 1773 by public auction in London. Among other classical libraries of an old-fashioned kind we should notice the Osterley Park collection, only recently dispersed, which was formed by Bryan Fairfax ; it was purchased *en bloc* in 1756 by Mr. Francis Child, and passed from him to the family of the Earl of Jersey.

Topham Beauclerc housed his thirty thousand volumes, as Walpole declared, in a building that reached halfway from London to Highgate ; his collection was in two parts, of which the first was mainly classical, and the other was very rich in English antiquities and history. In 1783 was sold almost the last of the encyclopædic collections which used to fill the position now occupied by great public libraries. Mr. Crofts possessed a treasury of Greek and Roman learning ; he was especially rich in philology, in Italian literature, in travels, in Scandinavian affairs ; 'under the shortest heads, some one or more rare articles occur, but in the copious classes literary curiosity is gratified, is highly feasted.'

Dr. Johnson's books were dispersed in a four-days'

sale in 1785. A copy of the interesting catalogue has lately been reprinted by The Club. The most valuable specimen, as a mere curiosity, would be the folio with which he beat the bookseller, but we suppose that very little on the whole was obtained for the 662 lots of learned volumes that had sprawled over his dusty floor. The Doctor had but little sympathy with the fashions that were beginning to prevail. He laughs in the *Rambler* at 'Cantilenus' with his first edition of *The Children in the Wood*, and the antiquary who despaired of obtaining one missing Gazette till it was sent to him 'wrapped round a parcel of tobacco.' 'Hirsutus,' we are told, 'very carefully amassed all the English books that were printed in the black character'; the fortunate virtuoso had 'long since completed his Caxton, and wanted but two volumes of a perfect Pynson.' In our own day we can hardly realise the idea of such riches; but the 'Rambler' scouted the notion of slighting or valuing a book because it was printed in the Roman or Gothic type. John Ratcliffe of Bermondsey was one of these 'black-letter dogs.' He had some advantages of birth and position; for, being a chandler and grocer, he could buy these old volumes by weight in the course of his trade. He died in 1776, the master of a whole 'galaxy of Caxtons'; his library is said to have held the essence of poetry, romance and history; it was more precious in flavour to the new *dilettanti* than the copious English stores of James West, the judicious President of the Royal

Society ; it was far more refined than the 'omnium gatherum' scattered in 1788 on Major Pearson's death, or Dr. Farmer's ragged regiments of old plays and frowsy ballads, and square-faced broadsides 'bought for thrice their weight in gold.'

M. Paris de Meyzieux was the owner of a splendid library. Dibdin has described his third sale, held in London during 1791, when the bibliomaniacs, it was said, used to cool themselves down with ice before they could face such excitement. Of himself he confessed that when he had seen the illuminations of Nicolas Jany, the snow-white 'Petrarch,' the 'Virgil' on vellum, life had no more to offer : 'after having seen only these three books I hope to descend to my obscure grave in perfect peace and happiness.' The *Livre d'Heures* printed for Francis I., which had belonged to the Duc de la Vallière, was bought by Sir Mark Sykes, and became one of his principal treasures at Sledmere.

Mr. Robert Heathcote had a most elegant library, in which might be seen the tallest Elzevirs and several Aldine classics 'in the chaste costume of Grolier.' It is said that the books passed lightly into his hands 'in a convivial moment,' much to their former owner's regret. About the year 1807 they passed into the miscellaneous crowd of Mr. Dent's books ; and twenty years afterwards the whole collection was dispersed at a low price, when the book-mania was giving way for a time to an affection for cheap and useful literature.



The fever was still high in 1810 when Mr. Heath's plain classics were snatched up at very extravagant terms. Colonel Stanley's library was typical of the taste of the day. His selection comprised rare Spanish and Italian poetry, novels and romances, 'De Bry's voyages complete, fine classics, and a singular set of *facetiae*.' It was sold in 1813, a few weeks after the dispersal of Mr. John Hunter's very similar collection. This was immediately followed by an auction of Mr. Gosset's books, which lasted for twenty-three days: they seem to have chiefly consisted of divinity and curious works on philology. Mr. John Towneley's library was sold a few months afterwards. Mr. Towneley was the owner of a fine 'Pontifical' of Innocent IV., and a missal by Giulio Clovio from the Farnese palace; his celebrated MS., known as the 'Towneley Iliad,' was bought by Dr. Charles Burney, and passed with the rest of his books to the British Museum. In 1816 Mr. Michael Wodhull died, after half-a-century spent in the steady collection of good books in the auctions of London and Paris: the recent sale of his library has made all the world familiar with his well-selected volumes, bound in russia by his faithful Roger Payne, and annotated on their fly-leaves with valuable memoranda of book-lore. We shall not repeat the story of Mr. Beckford's triumphant career, of the glories of Fonthill or the later splendours of the Hamilton Palace collection. We should note his purchase of Gibbon's books 'in order to have something to read



on passing through Lausanne.' 'I shut myself up,' said Mr. Beckford, 'for six weeks from early in the morning till night, only now and then taking a ride; the people thought me mad; I read myself nearly blind.' Beckford never saw the books again 'after once turning hermit there.' He gave them to his physician, Dr. Scholl, and they were sold by auction in 1833; most of them were scattered about the world, but some are said to be still preserved at Lausanne in the public library.

This period was marked by the rivalry between bibliophiles of high rank and great wealth, whose Homeric contests have been worthily described by Dibdin in his history of the Bibliomania. A note in one of the Althorp Caxtons records a more amicable arrangement. The book belonged to Mr. George Mason, at whose sale it was bought by the Duke of Roxburghe: 'The Duke and I had agreed not to oppose one another at the sale, but after the book was bought, to toss up who should win it, when I lost it; I bought it at the Roxburghe sale on the 17th of June, 1812, for £215 5s.' The Duke was chiefly interested in old English literature, Italian poetry, and romances of the Round Table; but we are told that shortly before his death he was 'in full pursuit of a collection of our dramatic authors.' It was at his sale that the Valdarfer Boccaccio was purchased by Lord Blandford, afterwards Duke of Marlborough, for £2260, a sum which at that time had never been reached as the price of a single

volume. It passed into the great collection at White Knights, which then contained, in addition to some of the rarest English books, the 'Bedford Missal,' another missal given by Queen Louise to Marguerite d'Angoulême, and a volume of prayers from the hand of the caligrapher Nicolas Jany. On the 17th of June, 1819, the White Knights library was sold on behalf of the owner's creditors; and the 'Boccaccio' found a safe home at Althorp, where George, Earl Spencer, had by fortunate purchases, by zeal in the pursuit of books, and by the aid of an accomplished librarian, formed that matchless collection which Renouard justly described as 'the finest private library in Europe.'

## INDEX.

- ÆLFRIC, Archbishop, 26.  
 Agricola, Rudolf, 87.  
 Aicardo, Paul, 176.  
 Aidan, 13, 17.  
 Albisse, 144.  
 Alexander ab Alexandro, 80.  
 Alfred, King, 25.  
 Allatius, Leo, 91.  
 Alphonso, Naples, 79.  
 Amboise, Cardinal de, 100.  
 Ancillon, David, 189.  
 Anne, Queen, 120, 121.  
 Anne of Austria, 108.  
 Anne of Brittany, 79.  
 Anselm, 27.  
 Apellicon, 3.  
 Arcanati, Galeazzo, 164.  
 Aretino, Carlo, 66.  
 — Leonardo, 59, 63, 65.  
 Argonne, Bonaventure d', 147, 148.  
 Aristotle, 3, 23, 33, 37, 57.  
 Arius, Montanus, 165.  
 Arundel, Archbishop, 56.  
 — Henry, Lord, 116.  
 — Thomas, Earl of, 85.  
 Ascham, Roger, 114.  
 Ashmole, Elias, 135, 136.  
 Askew, Anthony, Dr., 214.  
 Asser, 25.  
 Attavante, 83, 85.  
 Attalus, 2.  
 Aubrey, John, 135.  
 Augustus, 4.  
 Augustus of Brunswick, 85.  
 Aumale, Duc d', 105.  
 Aungerville (*see* Bury, Richard de).  
 Aurispa, John, 66, 70.  
 Aquinas, Thomas, 70.  
 BACON, Francis, 114.  
 — Roger, 30, 129.  
 Bagford, John, 120-122.  
 Bagni, 183.  
 Baillet, Adrian, 188, 189.  
 Baker (of Highgate), 207.  
 — Rev. Thomas, 210.  
 Bale, Bishop, 57.  
 Ballesdens, Jean, 148, 149.  
 Baluze, Etienne, 188.  
 Barberini, Cardinal, 183.  
 Barocci, Francesco, 117, 131.  
 Baron, Hyacinthe, 194, 198.  
 Barré, M., 194.  
 Bashkirtseff, Marie, 157.  
 Basingstoke, John, 34.  
 Beauclerc, Topham, 215.  
 Becatelli, Antonio, 79.  
 Beckford, Wm., 156, 218, 219.  
 Bede, 21, 22, 131.  
 Bedford, John, Duke of, 56, 59, 60, 220.  
 Bentley, Dr., 118, 119.  
 Bernard, Dr., 137, 138.  
 Berri, Jean Duc de, 94, 103.

- Berry, Duchesse de, 109.  
 Berryer, M., 189.  
 Bessarion, Cardinal, 52, 71.  
 Béthune, Hippolyte de, 94, 162.  
 Beza, Theodore, 123.  
 Bignon, Jérôme, 179.  
 Bigot, Jean, 148, 152.  
 — Robert, 152.  
 — Louis, 152.  
 Bill, John, 125, 126.  
 Biscop, Benedict, 20, 21.  
 Blanche, Queen, 60.  
 Blandford, Lord, 219.  
 Boccaccio, 49, 63, 64.  
 Bodley, Lawrence, 127.  
 — Sir Thomas, 115, 116, 123-128.  
 Boethius, 7, 12.  
 Boisot, Abbé, 192, 194.  
 Bongars, Jacques, 160, 161.  
 Boniface, St., 22, 23.  
 Booker, John, 136.  
 Borromeo, Frederic, 177, 183.  
 Bouchet, Henri, 191, 192.  
 Bouhier, Étienne de, 192.  
 — Jean de, 193.  
 — President, 193, 197.  
 Bourbon, Charles de, 103.  
 Brassicanus, 84.  
 Bretonvilliers, 191.  
 Bridges, John, 211, 212.  
 Bridget, St., 13, 15.  
 Bristol, Earl of, 130.  
 Britton, Thomas, 213.  
 Brochard, Professor, 196.  
 Browne, Sir Thomas, 7.  
 Bruges, Jean de, 94.  
 — Louis de, 93-94.  
 — *See* La Gruthuyse.  
 Bucer, Martin, 112.  
 Buchanan, George, 115.  
 Budæus, 82, 98-100, 140, 146, 147.  
 Buffon, 200.  
 Buonaparte, Pauline, 109.  
 Burgh, Elizabeth de, 54.  
 Burnet, Bishop, 205.  
 Burney, Dr. Charles, 218.  
 Burton, Robert, 126, 213.  
 Bury, Richard de, 28-29, 32-40, 53-58.  
 Busbec, Angere, 84.  
 Busch, Hermann, 87-89.  
 CÆSAR, Julius, 2, 4.  
 — Sir Julius, 136, 137.  
 Calcavi, 188.  
 Camden, William, 117, 127.  
 Canonici, Mattheo, 133.  
 Capranica, Angelo, 81.  
 — Domenico, 81.  
 Carbury, Lord, 211.  
 Carew, Lord, 207.  
 Cartwright (the actor), 207.  
 Casaubon, Méric, 124.  
 — Isaac, 169, 170, 177, 179.  
 Charron de Ménars, 173, 174, 199.  
 Chartraire de Bourbonne, 194.  
 Chevalier, Étienne, 101.  
 — Nicolas, 102.  
 Chifflet, Jules, 192.  
 Child, Francis, 215.  
 Christina of Pisa, 60.  
 Christina (Queen of Sweden), 94, 149, 154, 159, 162, 187.  
 Chrysoloras, 50, 63, 66.  
 Cino da Pistoia, 41.  
 Cassiodorus, 12, 23.  
 Caxton, William, 93, 95, 97.  
 Ceolfrid of Jarrow, 21.  
 Chamillard, Madame de, 195.  
 Charles I., 112, 122, 152.  
 — II., 122, 133.  
 — V. (of France), 59, 60, 94.  
 — V. (Emperor), 192.  
 — VII. (of France), 101, 102.

Charles VIII. (of France), 79, 100.

— IX. (of France), 106, 107.

— the Bold, 95, 96.

— the Great, 20, 23.

— of Orleans, 102.

Clarendon, Earl of, 203, 207.

Clavell, Walter, 134.

Clement, VII., Pope, 69.

— XII., Pope, 181.

Clénard, Nicolas, 167.

Cleopatra, 2.

Cobham, Bishop, 55.

— Lord, 97.

Cœlius, 77.

Colbert, 148, 187, 188.

Coleraigne, Lord, 211.

Colet, Dean, 208.

Columba, St., 13, 15-17, 130.

Columbus, Christopher, 168.

— Ferdinand, 166-168.

Condé, Princesse de, 105.

Congreve, 213.

Consentius, 10, 11.

Costa, Solomon da, 133.

Cotton, Sir John, 118.

— Sir Robert, 18, 113, 117, 118, 129, 178.

— Sir Thomas, 118.

Courteney, Richard, 56.

Cox, Captain, 115.

Coxeter, Thomas, 203, 207.

Cracherode, Clayton, 153.

Cranmer, Archbishop, 112, 113.

Crofts, Thomas, 215.

Cromleholme, Samuel, 208.

Cujacius, 160.

Cuthbert, St., 18.

DANIEL, Bishop, 22.

Dee, Dr., 114, 130, 136.

Dent, John, 217.

Descordes, Jean, 184.

Des Essars, Antoine, 60.

Desportes, Philippe, 102.

D'Ewes, Sir Symonds, 120.

Diane de Poitiers, 104, 106.

Digby, Sir Kenelm, 128-30.

Dodsworth, Roger, 134-35.

Domitian, 4.

Dorchester, Lord, 208.

Douce, Francis, 133-34.

Dryden, 213.

Du Barry, 109, 199.

Dubois, Simeon, 184.

Dudley, Robert (Leicester), 114, 206.

Du Fay, Charles, 148, 196, 197.

Dugdale, Sir William, 135.

Dunstan, St., 25, 128.

Du Puy, Charles, 171, 172.

— Jacques, 171, 173.

— Pierre, 171, 173.

Dury, John, 116.

EADBURGA, Abbess, 22.

Edward VI., 112.

Egbert of York, 23.

Elisabeth, Madame, 109.

Elizabeth, Queen, 112, 113.

Ellesmere, Lord, 136.

Erasmus, 71, 80, 87, 89, 90, 98, 99, 140.

Essex, Lord, 127.

Estienne, Henri, 89, 90, 169, 193.

Estrées, Duc d', 194.

— Gabrielle d', 106.

Eusebius, 6.

Evelyn, John, 85, 190.

FAIRFAX, Bryan, 215.

— Lord, 116, 117, 134, 135.

Falconnet, Dr., 194.

Farmer, Dr., 217.

Farnese, Cardinal, 159.

Fauchet, Claude, 162.

Faure, Antoine, 151.  
 Ferrar, Nicholas, 121, 122.  
 Finnen, St., 16.  
 Firmin-Didot, 101, 156.  
 Fisher, Bishop, 111, 112.  
 Fitz-Ralph, Archbishop of Armagh, 31.  
 Fléchier, Esprit, 150.  
 Fleming, Robert, 97.  
 Fletewode, W., 136.  
 Folkes, Martin, 134.  
 Fontius, 83.  
 Foucault, Nicolas, 198.  
 Francis, St., 30, 31.  
 — I., 163, 217.  
 — II., 106, 107.  
 Freebairn, 209.  
 Fugger, Raimond, 90.  
 — Ulric, 90, 91, 185.  
  
 GAFFAREL, Jacques, 182.  
 Gafori, Franc, 143, 144.  
 Gaignat, 93, 153, 194.  
 Gale, Thomas, 134.  
 Gascoigne, Dr., 34, 128, 130.  
 Gascoyne, Richard, 204.  
 Gascq de la Lande, 198.  
 Gasparus, Achilles, 91.  
 George of Trebisonde, 71, 72.  
 Germanus, St., 11.  
 Gibbon, 218, 219.  
 Gilles, Pierre, 104.  
 Giraldis, Cynthio, 77.  
 — Lilio, 77.  
 Girardot de Préfond, Paul, 194, 198.  
 Gloucester, Humphrey Duke of, 56-59, 124.  
 Gosset, 218.  
 Gouffier, Arthur, 102, 103.  
 — Charles, 103.  
 Gough, Richard, 133, 134.  
 Granvelle, Cardinal de, 192.

Gray, William, 97.  
 Grenville, Thomas, 153.  
 Grolier, Étienne, 136, 146.  
 Grolier, Jean, 56, 100, 103, 106, 139, 162, 175, 196, 198, 201, 217.  
 Grostête, 30, 33, 34, 128, 129.  
 Guillard, Charlotte, 102.  
 Guinguené, Pierre-Louis, 200.  
 Guy Earl of Warwick, 54.  
 Guy de Rocheford, 96.  
 Guyon de Sardières, 106.  
  
 HACKETT, Bishop, 123, 208.  
 Hale, Sir Matthew, 137.  
 Harley, Edward, 119, 203, 210, 212.  
 — Robert, 119-122.  
 — Gabriel, 114.  
 Hearne, Thomas, 134, 211-214.  
 Heath, Benjamin, 218.  
 Hcathcote, Robert, 217.  
 Heber, Richard, 213.  
 Heinsius, Daniel, 89, 180.  
 Henri II., 104, 105, 109.  
 — III., 107.  
 — IV., 107.  
 Henry IV. (England), 56.  
 — V. (England), 56.  
 — VII. (England), 111, 112.  
 — VIII. (England), 111.  
 — Prince, 116.  
 Hohendorf, Baron, 148.  
 Holkot, Robert, 35.  
 Hoym, Count d', 148, 194, 197.  
 Hunter, John, 218.  
 — William, 202.  
 Huntingdon, Robert, 131.  
 Hurtado de Mendoza, Diego 166.  
 Hutten, Ulric von, 89.  
  
 INGUIMBERT, Don Malachid, 181.

- JAMES I., 115-116, 126, 136.  
 James, Dr. Thomas, 125-127.  
 Jekyll, Sir Joseph, 134.  
 Jerome, St., 6, 14, 102.  
 Jersey, Earl of, 215.  
 Joanna II. (Naples), 79, 109.  
 John, Duke of Burgundy, 95.  
 John, King (France), 59.  
 John, Precentor, 22.  
 John of Ravenna, 49.  
 Johnson, Samuel, 119, 215, 216.  
 Jonson, Ben, 114.  
 Jovian, 7.  
 Julian, Emperor, 6, 7.  
 Julius II., Pope, 139.  
 Juvenal des Ursins, 101.
- KENNETT, Bishop, 211.  
 Kinnoul, Earl of, 211.
- LABÉ, Louise, 102.  
 Lambert de Thorigny, 194.  
 La Gruthuyse, Louis de, 93, 94.  
 Lami, Giovanni, 73.  
 Lamoignon, Chrétien de, 188, 189.  
 — G. de, 148, 187, 188.  
 Lanfranc, 27.  
 Langarad, 16.  
 Lange, Rudolf, 87.  
 Lascaris, Constantine, 81.  
 — John, 81, 82, 104.  
 Laud, Archbishop, 129, 131.  
 Lauwrin, Mark, 142, 144.  
 La Vallière, Duc de, 61, 83, 94,  
 106, 153, 191, 194, 217.  
 Le Blond, Abbé, 201.  
 Lebrixa, Antonio, 166.  
 Leland, John, 34.  
 Le Neve, Peter, 120, 121.  
 Leo X., Pope, 69, 72, 81, 82, 89,  
 104.  
 Leo, the Philosopher, 9.  
 Leofric, Bishop, 26, 128.
- Leoni, Pompeo, 164.  
 Leontio Pilato, 49, 50.  
 Le Tellier, Archbishop, 150, 151.  
 Ligorio, Piero, 77.  
 Lilly, William, 136.  
 Lipsius, Justus, 162, 180.  
 Loche, Gilles de, 132.  
 Loménie, Antoine de, 184.  
 Louis (of Hungary), 83, 85.  
 — IX., 151.  
 — XI., 62, 101.  
 — XII., 94, 177, 193.  
 — XIII., 183, 184.  
 — XIV., 94.  
 — XV., 109, 188.  
 — XVI., 173.  
 Louis-Philippe, 105.  
 Louise de Loraine, 107.  
 Louise de Savoie, 103, 220.  
 Lucian, 5, 170.  
 Lucullus, 4.  
 Lulla, Bishop, 22.  
 Lumley, Lord, 116, 127.
- MACARTHY, Count, 141, 153, 155,  
 194, 199.  
 Magliabecchi, Antonio, 74, 75.  
 Maintenon, Madame de, 195.  
 Maioli, Thomas, 141, 144.  
 Malton, Lord, 204.  
 Mansion, Colard, 93, 95.  
 Mansard, Francis, 162.  
 Margaret of Austria, 96.  
 Margaret of Burgundy, 95.  
 Marguerite d'Angoulême, 103,  
 220.  
 Marguerite de Valois, 108, 109.  
 Marie Antoinette, 109.  
 Marie Leczinska, Queen, 108, 109.  
 Mary of Austria, 85, 96.  
 Mary of Burgundy, 96.  
 Mary, Queen of Scots, 106, 107.  
 Marucelli, 73.



- Mason, George, 219.  
 Matthias Corvinus, 82-86, 212.  
 Mazarin, Cardinal, 162, 183-187.  
 Mazenta, 163, 164.  
 Mead, Dr., 210, 212, 214.  
 Médici, Catherine de, 104-106, 108.  
 — Cosmo de', 63, 66, 68, 104.  
 — Lorenzo de', 67, 68, 82, 83, 97.  
 — Marie de, 134.  
 — Pietro de', 68.  
 Melanchthon, Philip, 90.  
 Melzi, Francesco, 163.  
 Merard de St. Just, 199.  
 Mercatellis, Rafael de, 92, 93.  
 Mesmes, Guillaume, 151.  
 — Henri, 184, 151.  
 — Henri, junior, 151, 162, 179, 183.  
 — Jean Antoine, 152.  
 — Louis-Emeric, 152.  
 Mirabeau, Honoré de, 200.  
 Mirandula, Pico della, 68, 71, 73, 88.  
 Monson, Sir William, 205.  
 Montacute, Lord, 127.  
 Montaigne, 156.  
 Moore, John (Bishop), 122, 123.  
 Morata, Olympia, 77, 78.  
 More, Sir Thomas, 98.  
  
 NAUDÉ, Gabriel, 182, 187.  
 Negri, Stefano, 142, 143.  
 Neleus, 3.  
 Nevison, Dr., 113.  
 Newton, John de, 54.  
 Niccoli, Niccolo, 66, 68.  
 Nicholas v. (Pope), 69, 70.  
 Norfolk, Duke of, 85.  
 Nuñez, Ferdinand, 166, 185.  
  
 O'DONNELL, David, 17.  
  
 O'Donnell, Sir Neal, 17.  
 Oldys, William, 86, 119, 121, 122, 202, 214.  
 Oppenheim, David, 133.  
 Orsini, Fulvio, 158, 160, 172.  
 Osorio, Jerome, 127.  
  
 PALLADIUS, 14.  
 Pamphilus, 6.  
 Paris de Meyzieux, 217.  
 Parker, Archbishop, 19, 113, 120, 128.  
 Pars, Jacques de, 101.  
 Patrick, St., 13-15, 130.  
 Paullus, Æmilius, 4.  
 Pearson, Major, 217.  
 Peiresc, Nicolas, 132, 161, 177-182.  
 Pembroke, Henry, Earl of, 211.  
 — Thomas, Earl of, 210.  
 — William, Earl of, 131.  
 Pepusch, John, 206.  
 Pepys, Samuel, 133, 213.  
 Pétau, Alexander, 162, 186.  
 — Paul, 148, 158, 161, 162, 209.  
 Peters, Hugh, 116, 131.  
 Petrarch, 35, 36, 41-63, 76, 80, 166.  
 Philelpho, 66, 67, 70, 142.  
 Philip II. (of Spain), 82, 164.  
 Philippe le Bon (Burgundy), 92, 95.  
 Philippe le Hardi (Burgundy), 94, 95.  
 Photius, 8, 9, 74.  
 Pichon, Jérôme, 103.  
 Pignoria Antonio, 76.  
 Pinelli, Gian-Vincenzio, 175-178.  
 Pinelli, Maffeo, 177.  
 Pirckheimer, 85-87.  
 Pithou, François, 151  
 — Pierre, 148, 170, 186.

- Poggio, 63-67, 72, 73, 79, 80, 175.  
 Politian, 68, 71, 97.  
 Pollio Asinius, 4, 146.  
 Polydore Vergil, 165.  
 Pompadour, Madame de, 109, 199.  
 Postel, Guillaume, 1, 104.  
 Prynne, 120.  
 Ptolemy (Philadelphus), 3, 46.  
  
 RABELAIS, 142, 200.  
 Rameses, 2.  
 Ranconnet, 106, 107.  
 Rantzau, Marshal, 154, 155, 185.  
 Rasse de Neux, 144.  
 Ratcliffe, John, 216.  
 Rawlinson, Richard, 127, 133, 134, 175, 213.  
 — Thomas, 205, 213, 214.  
 René of Anjou, 79.  
 Renée, Princesse, 77, 177.  
 Renouard, Antoine, 156, 200, 201, 220.  
 Repington, Philip, 56.  
 Reuchlin, Johann, 88-90.  
 Rhenanus, Beatus, 87, 142.  
 Richelieu, Cardinal, 149, 171, 182.  
 Rigault, Nicolas, 179.  
 Rivers, Anthony, Lord, 97.  
 — Richard, Lord, 127.  
 Robertet, Florimonde, 102.  
 Rodolf II., Emperor, 84.  
 Roe, Sir Thomas, 131.  
 Rohan, Cardinal de, 145, 174.  
 Ronsard, Pierre, 102.  
 Rothelin (Charles d'Orléans), 191, 197, 198.  
 Roxburghe, Duke of, 219.  
  
 SAINT ANDRÉ, Jean de, 162.  
 Saint Vallier, Comte de, 105.  
  
 Salutati, 68.  
 Sambucus, Dr., 84, 145, 146.  
 Sammonicus Serenus, 46.  
 Sancroft, Archbishop, 206.  
 Sartines, Gabriel de, 194.  
 Savile, Sir Henry, 127, 179.  
 Savonarola, 68, 73.  
 Saye, Lord, 97.  
 Scaliger, Joseph, 71, 99, 132, 161, 169, 177, 178.  
 Séguier, Charles, 149.  
 — Pierre, 149, 179.  
 Seillièrre, Baron, 156.  
 Seignelaye, Marquis de, 188.  
 Selden, 116, 131-133, 137, 208.  
 Seneca, 5, 7.  
 Shakespeare, 114.  
 Sheldon, Archbishop, 206.  
 Sherrington, Walter, 97.  
 Shewsbury, 59.  
 Sidonius Apollinaris, 11.  
 Silvestri, Eurialo, 144.  
 Sixtus v., 70.  
 Sixtus of Sienna, 76.  
 Smith, Joseph, 215.  
 — Richard, 211.  
 Soltikoff, Prince, 101.  
 Soubise, Prince de, 141, 148, 174.  
 Spelman, Sir Henry, 117.  
 Spencer, George, Earl, 220.  
 Spenser, 114.  
 Stafford, Marquis of, 136.  
 Stanley, Colonel, 218.  
 Stillingfleet, Bishop, 120.  
 Stowe, 120.  
 Strozzi, Marshal, 73, 104.  
 Strype, 205.  
 Sulla, 3.  
 Sunderland, Earl of, 209, 210.  
 Sussex, Earl of, 205.  
 Sykes, Sir Mark, 217.  
  
 TENISON, Archbishop, 207.

Theodore of Gaza, 71, 72.

— of Tarsus, 18, 21.

Thomason, George, 123.

Thou, Abbé de, 173.

— Francois de, 173.

— Jacques-Auguste de, 105,

108, 109, 120, 145, 146, 148,

169-174, 177-179, 185, 212-213.

— Jacques-Auguste de (junior),  
173, 174.

Thyard, Pontus de, 193.

Tiptoft, John, 97.

Toletus, Cardinal, 160.

Tomasini, Giacomo, 52, 183.

Tory, Geoffroy, 145.

Tournon, Cardinal de, 186.

Towneley, John, 218.

Trajan, 4.

Tyrannion, 3.

URBINO, Elizabeth d', 81.

— Federigo d' 80.

— Francesco d', 81.

— Guidobaldo d', 80, 81.

— Leonora d', 134.

Urfé, Claude d', 94.

— Honoré d', 94.

Usher, 117.

VAN HULTHEM, 94.

Vasée, Jean, 167.

Vendôme, Duchesse de, 107.

Vérard, Antoine, 111, 193.

Vic, Dominique, 147.

— Méric de, 147.

Vinci, Leonardo da, 106, 162-164.

Vorstius, 115.

WAKE, Archbishop, 134.

Walsingham, Sir Francis, 206.

Wanley, Humphrey, 120, 210,  
211.

Ware, Sir James, 207.

Webb, Philip Carteret, 136.

West, James, 216.

Wentmore, Abbot, 54.

Whethamstede, Abbot, 59.

Whittington, Sir Richard, 31.

Wilfrid, St., 21, 22.

Williams, Dean, 208.

Wodhull, Michael, 218.

Wood, Anthony, 118, 128, 135.

XIMÈNES, Cardinal, 121, 165,  
184.

24



## DATE DUE

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# MEDICAL

LIBRARY

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100	101	102	103	104	105	106	107	108	109	110	111	112	113	114	115	116	117	118	119	120	121	122	123	124	125	126	127	128	129	130	131	132	133	134	135	136	137	138	139	140	141	142	143	144	145	146	147	148	149	150	151	152	153	154	155	156	157	158	159	160	161	162	163	164	165	166	167	168	169	170	171	172	173	174	175	176	177	178	179	180	181	182	183	184	185	186	187	188	189	190	191	192	193	194	195	196	197	198	199	200	201	202	203	204	205	206	207	208	209	210	211	212	213	214	215	216	217	218	219	220	221	222	223	224	225	226	227	228	229	230	231	232	233	234	235	236	237	238	239	240	241	242	243	244	245	246	247	248	249	250	251	252	253	254	255	256	257	258	259	260	261	262	263	264	265	266	267	268	269	270	271	272	273	274	275	276	277	278	279	280	281	282	283	284	285	286	287	288	289	290	291	292	293	294	295	296	297	298	299	300	301	302	303	304	305	306	307	308	309	310	311	312	313	314	315	316	317	318	319	320	321	322	323	324	325	326	327	328	329	330	331	332	333	334	335	336	337	338	339	340	341	342	343	344	345	346	347	348	349	350	351	352	353	354	355	356	357	358	359	360	361	362	363	364	365	366	367	368	369	370	371	372	373	374	375	376	377	378	379	380	381	382	383	384	385	386	387	388	389	390	391	392	393	394	395	396	397	398	399	400	401	402	403	404	405	406	407	408	409	410	411	412	413	414	415	416	417	418	419	420	421	422	423	424	425	426	427	428	429	430	431	432	433	434	435	436	437	438	439	440	441	442	443	444	445	446	447	448	449	450	451	452	453	454	455	456	457	458	459	460	461	462	463	464	465	466
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